



# TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

**I** Have adventured  
twice already into  
the Presse, in mat-  
ters controversall,  
and (through grace)  
what I have writ-  
ten hath found  
good acceptance in the eyes of the godly  
wise; and now upon the earnest perswasion  
of godly and worthy friends here, unto the  
Lord, and unto me, I am sending forth this  
discourse, which respecteth a matter prac-  
tical. Its not a little exercise unto godly  
A 3 minds



## To the Reader.

Zach. 14. 9.

Zeph. 3. 9.

*minds, and much more grievous is it in the sight of the God of Truth and Peace, that there is so great and confused a noise of axes and hammers now a daies in the Lords Temple; and ah! when will that blessed time come, when unto all the Lords people whatsoever, [there shall bee but one Lord, and his Name one.] Verily, its strange to see, that in these dayes the Lord according to his promise, should so graciously afford to his people the means; even turn to the people a pure lip, a pure Ministry; and yet the promised end thereof is not attained, namely, the serving of the Lord with one shoulder, or with one consent. I know there are many lets thereunto, but surely this is not the least, that the word held forth by the purer Ministry thereof, hath not had such effectual force upon their hearts, who enjoy the same, as to bring them to bee conscionable in calling upon the Name of the Lord, which is the more immediate end of such a Ministry. For so saith the Lord, I will turn to the people a pure lip or language, that they may call upon the Name of the Lord; for then the next effect would follow, which there also is promised, they would come to  
serve*

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serve the Lord with one consent. But the subtle enemy to all purity and power of godliness, hee bestirreth himself what in him lyeth, to heighten and increase as many differences in judgement in Christians as may bee, and that may breed and feed distances in affection, and so undermine any such unanimous attending to serve the Lord. The heads and hearts both of Preachers and Professors shall bee so busily and continually taken up with endlesse disputes, that they shall have little leisure or list to attend the practicals of Religion, wherein the life and power of pure Religion doth mainly consist. Disputing times about the Speculatives of Religion, are wont to be declining times in the Practicals, and Vitals thereof. Witnesse former ages, wherein the School-men and their notions flourished, but purity and power of Religion withered. And, ab that this present age, which yeildeth so many Sceptickes in Religion, had not withall increased the Spitals of decaied, unsound, spiritually sick, lame, blind, deaf, dumb, yea, dying, and twice dead Christians. Surely, If christians had maintained acquaintance with God in prayer, they had never fallen in thus with so many delusive fancies, and

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so come to have fallen out with the weightier matters of God, so as to bee at such distances from them in their Spirits. If they had faithfully repaired to the Lord for his counsel, their ears and hearts had not been so open to Satanical whisperings. How much was that man of God in prayer, to bee kept sound in the Faith? witness his frequent requests this way, mentioned, Psal. 119. 10. O let me not wander from thy commandements; and vers. 29. remove from mee the way of lying, (doctrinally, as well as practically considered) and grant mee thy law graciousl. Vers. 43. Take not away utterly the word of truth out of my mouth, so shall I keep thy law continually. Ver. 66. Teach mee good judgement and knowledge, for I have beleev'd thy commandements. Ver. 80. Make my heart sound in thy Statutes, that I bee not ashamed. The corrupt Prophets and Priests of old, who seduced the people from the truth, were persons that made no conscience of prayer, Jer. 10. 21. The Pastours are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord. Those Apostatizing Newters in Religion of old, they were men that were  
care-

## To the Reader.

carelesse of seeking of God, and counselling with him in their prayers, Zeph. 1. 6. And them that are turned back, and those that have not sought the Lord, nor inquired for him. *The like may be well feared in Christians in these Apostatizing times from the truthes and waies of God; that they do not talk much with God in prayer, and hee as little delighteth to speak to their hearts. They grow loose-hearted, and strangers to God; and Satan espying this distance betwixt them and God, falleth in with them, entreth other delusive discourses with them; and at length withdraweth them yet further from the Lord. But thou, Christian Reader, plye it with the Lord in prayer, that hee would draw thee after him, and hee will bring thee into his Chambers, Cant. 1. 4. Hee will bring thee into the secret of his Counsels, presence and protection, where thou shalt bee kept safe in judgement, heart and life, in the worst times. Feruent and faithfull prayers would also help very much to cast out the unclean spirit out of the land, and to dispossesse the spirits of many Christians, who are even possessed by an erring spirit. If there were also but more men of*  
God



## To the Reader.

*God, who might Moses-like, continue, holding up their hands in prayer, no doubt but Amalakite spirited seducers would soon bee put to the worst; yea, though Philistine-like, they had even routed the Churches of Christ, yet a few such blessed worthies of God, who are mighty with God in prayer, would like so many Shammahs or Eleazers, soon prevail for a blessed day over them. If Jonathan had not wrought with God (in prayer) 1 Sam. 14. 45. Israel had never had so glorious a day, as they had against those Philistines. If men had even given themselves to the Devil, as too many now have to spirits of Error, yet if Luther-like, wee were more in prayer, there might bee help that way, and they rescued, and those Spirits discarded. And what gracious heart can bear it, to see so many poor Christians even drawn to death, and forbear crying to the Lord for their deliverance! Mystical Babylon devoted to ruine, hasteneth to its downfal, and shall not wee bee up, and doing in prayer now to help dispatch her, as they of old did that other Babylon? Jer. 51. 35. The violence done to mee be upon Babylon, shall the Inhabitants say*

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say. My blood upon the Inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say; namely, in their earnest prayers. The time approaches, when the promised mercies to the poor blinded Jews shall bee accomplished; and what more seasonable work of love can we do for the Lord, or them, than to be now much in praying? Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! In a word, Let all the enemies of England, old, or new, to Commonwealth, or Church, know, that Churches of praying Beleevers, are terrible as so many Armies with Banners, as so many thundring Legions. Let them tremble to think, that whatever breaches they have occasioned amongst the Lords people, yet that there is a considerable stand of resolute ones left, right bred Israelites, notable good wrestlers, and as speciall prevailers with God, I beleeve that the Churches enemies, the Prelates, and others of Englands enemies to their Civil State, have been forced to see or feel the force of Saints Prayers. Wee may set God to work, (pardon the expression) in these dangerous times for Church and Commonwealth

by

Psalm. 14. 7.

## To the Reader.

by our Prayers; as hee did of old in like case, Psal. 119. 126. It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they make void thy Law.

Wherefore, Christian Reader, albeit others have written worthily about this Subject of Prayer in their times: yet let it not seem unseasonable to thee, or be accepted by thee, that I also (though the most unfit and unworthy to attempt so great a work) do at this time likewise, bring in evidence with other Witnesses to the same Truth, concerning the Nature, Necessity, Excellency, and Efficacy of holy and spiritual Prayer; and that I also, according to that small measure of Light and grace received of the Lord, do hereby indeavour to stirre up thy pure mind, by way of Remembrance, that thou mayest be mindful, not alone of their Writings, but especially of the words before spoken, both by the Prophets and Apostles concerning this Subject of Prayer, that as in preaching upon it here, the Lord was pleased to blesse that Discourse of Prayer to sundry

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## To the Reader.

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*sundry souls, so (if it may bee his gracious pleasure) it may bee of lively and effectual use to thy souls welfare and peace: Which shall bee his Prayer, who is*

Thine in the Lord Jesus.

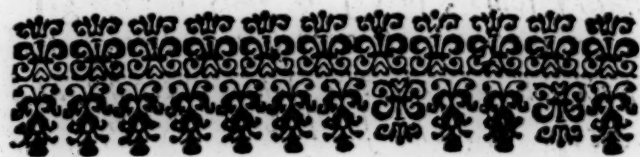
Lyn in New-  
England, the  
24. of October,  
1653.

THOMAS COBBET.



The





**The Heads of the Chapters,** the particular Contents whereof stand in the Margin of the Book, at their proper places which they refer to.

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## PART. I.

Chap. 1. **T**He several Reasons of prayer, taken from God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and from Saints themselves; also from the necessities of, and engagements unto prayer.

Chap. 2. Ejaculatory prayer is described, the excellency of it is shown, in that it is the Saints first and last holy breathing, the Alpha and Omega of solemn prayer.

Chap. 3. The Requisites unto publick prayer are handled.

Chap. 4. The duty of Family-prayer is handled.

Chap.

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Chap. 5. *Handling the duty of Closet-praier.*

Chap. 6. *The Rules about praying for others is handled, and also of prayer of Imprecation against others.*

### PART. II.

Chap. 1. *Is shewn wherein Importunity in prayer consisteth.*

Chap. 2. *Handling the Opportunities of prayer.*

Chap. 3. *Sheweth what it is to pray indelicately; and not to give out in prayer.*

Chap. 4. *Touching faith in praier, and the necessity of it; and what faith is required in praier.*

Chap. 5. *Sheweth wherein Humility in prayer consisteth.*

Chap. 6. *Sheweth wherein Sincerity in praier consisteth.*

Chap. 7. *Sheweth a threefold watchfulness in prayer is required, and wherein it consisteth.*

### PART. III.

Chap. 1. *Touching unregenerate persons praier: and that they are bound to pray.*

Chap.

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- Chap. 2. *Touching distraction in prayer, and the causes thereof, and what distractions nullifie prayer.*
- Chap. 3. *Shewing that things materially good suggested in prayer, may bee delusions.*
- Chap. 4. *Shewing what means are to bee used in prayer.*
- Chap. 5. *About the time that is to bee spent in prayer, which is to bee much.*
- Chap. 6. *Shewing the necessity of pleading in prayer.*
- Chap. 7. *Shewing the causes of straitnings in prayer.*
- Chap. 8. *About enlargements in prayer, which are saving.*
- Chap. 9. *About meltings in prayer, which are from saving Principles.*
- Chap. 10. *Shewing how to conceive of God in prayer.*
- Chap. 11. *In what order wee are to direct our prayers to God.*



# GOSPEL INCENSE:

OR,

## A DISCOURSE

About

# PRAYER.

Delivered in sundry Lecture-  
Sermons, from 1 *Thes.* 5. 17.

*Pray without ceasing.*

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### PART I.

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### CHAP. I.

*Touching Prayer in General.*



Not to spend time in Analy-  
sing the Chapter: In this  
Text you have two parts:  
1. The Duty enjoyned, *Pray.*  
2. The modification of the  
Duty, *Without ceasing.* In  
the former also you have, 1. The *Sovereign*

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com-



commanding this Duty; even God the Father; yea, *Jesus Christ* his Son, who by his Spirit sent *Paul* his Apostle to deliver this piece of Message, *1 Thess. 1. 1.* 2 The Subjects enjoyned this Duty, the Church of *Thessalonica* joyntly and severally; and so in them, all other Churches of Christ, and Members of them. yea, all Christians whatsoever; whence observe,

Doct.

*That Incessant Prayer, or Prayer without ceasing, is a duty which the Lord requireth of all and every one of his people in a special manner, Luk. 21. 36. Pray always, Luk. 18. 1. He spake a Parable to the end that men ought always to pray. Rom. 12. 12. Continuing instant in Prayer, Col. 4. 2. Continue in Prayer, Eph. 6. 18. Praying always, &c.*

For the better and fuller handling of this weighty service of *Prayer*, consider, 1 Of the Duty it self, *Prayer*. 2. Of the Modification of the performance of it; *scil. Without ceasing*. 3. Of the conditions required to such incessant praying. 4. Of some cases of Conscience respecting that incessant exercise of our selves in it.

Touching the Duty it self, *Prayer*; let it be considered.

1 More Generally in the nature of it, both as held forth in several names, given to *Prayer* in Scripture, and in a short definition thereof.

2 More particularly.

1 In the sorts and species of it: as

1 *Snd.*

1 *Sudden*, or ejaculatory Prayer, 2 *Set* and solemn Prayer : and that either publick or Church Prayer ; private or family prayer ; secret or Closet prayer.

2 In the *parts* of Prayer, which albeit many, yet we shall briefly only consider of Prayer. 1 *Of Intercession.* 2 *Of Imprecation.*

Prayer is a duty very many ways enobled and honoured of God and his people ; and as that which is of large use and extent, whose worth is not known, nor easily decyphered ; whose nature is not readily conceived or described, and yet that which should be most familiar to the Saints ; it is set forth in Scripture by many names : Let us then read over the Titles of this royal work.

It is called an *Offering* : *Zeph. 3. 10. My Suppliants shall come and bring mine Offering* ; or they shall in a solemn, reverent, and cheerful manner pray unto the Lord, even as the Godly use to bring the Lords Offering to him, *Isa. 19. 21.* The converted *Egyptians* will [ *do* ] *Sacrifice and Offering* : make Prayer their Spiritual work and business. And prayer may well be so called ; for : As that was, so this, to be presented by all sorts ; poor or rich, none exempted from it. 2 As those Offerings were *costly* to all sorts considering their several abilities ; so are these *Spiritual Sacrifices*, 1 *Pet. 2. 5.* witness the suppliants tears, sighs, strivings, pleadings, &c.

commanding this Duty; even God the Father; yea, Jesus Christ his Son, who by his Spirit sent Paul his Apostle to deliver this piece of Message, 1 Theff. 1. 1. 2 The Subjects enjoined this Duty, the Church of Thessalonica jointly and severally; and so in them, all other Churches of Christ, and Members of them. yea, all Christians whatsoever; whence observe,

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3. As they were free services, *Levit. 1. 3.* So are these: Christs Suppliants are free Sacrificers, *Psal. 110. 3.* Hebr. *Their spirit is forward to pray.* *Matth. 26. 41.* *To will is present with them,* *Rom. 7. 18. 21.* Their prayer is their gift, *Mat. 5. 24.* 4. As those were to be clean and pure so are the Saints Prayers, *Job 16. 17.* *Also my prayer is pure,* *Mal. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.* 5. If we should compare Prayer with their particular Offerings, it would answer to this name. As, their *Mincah*, or Meat Offering, *Psal. 96. 8.* All the Subjects of Christs Kingdome must bring an Offering ( *Mincah* ) into the Courts, *Mal. 1. 11.* The converted Gentiles will bring an Offering ( or *Mincah* ) to the Lord; meaning especially this holy Offering of Prayer, which as that of old, 1. Is to bee of *fine flower*, *Lev. 2. 1.* and well sifted, tryed, and refined in all the particulars and parts of it, and mens aimes in it. We should not ask *amiss*, either *unlawful things*; or though lawful, yet to *spend upon our lusts*, *Jam. 4. 2.* It must be mingled with the oyl of Grace and gracious affections. 3. Also perfumed with the sweet Frankincense of Christs Merit and Mediation, applied by faith. 4. All seasoned with that holy salt of gracious expressions outwardly, *Col. 4. 2, 3, 6.* and mortified desires and affections inwardly, *Mark 9. 49.* 5. Avoyding the honey of humane eloquence, or affectation of expression, but especially of inordinate desires or lusts.

Wee

We might also compare it with other of their Offerings; but shall forbear, remembering this only, that we speak thus in reference to these, as part of their Worship, and not as Types of Christ.

Prayer is called *Incense*, Psal. 141. 2. *Let my prayer come before thee as Incense*, Mal. 1. 2 Prayer Incense.

11. *In every place pure Incense shall be offered to thy name*, Rev. 5. 8. *Vials full of odors which are the prayers of the Saints*. Look as that was compounded of very costly materials, *Exod.* 30. 34. so is a Spiritual prayer; as they were small beaten, so in this; matters are not rudely and confusedly, but deliberately, advisedly, preparedly, and very particularly presented before the Lord. The Saints in their prayers have also their hearts broken and bruised, and parcelled out suitably to the very particulars mentioned in Prayer; nor is the fire of the Spirit, and of holy zeal wanting therein, which causeth them to send out holy vapors of fragrant spiritual sighs and desires before the Lord: & whilst these spiritual Priests are through faith exercised, offering up this their holy Incense upon the Altar Jesus Christ, there is but a step as it were 'twixt them and heaven, that Holy of Holies. O how neer are the Saints, so exercised, to Jesus Christ, as that covering Mercy-seat! What precious answers of Grace receive they oftentimes from the Oracle of God! How speedily do their holy odors pierce and pass into the

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Holy

3 Prayer a lifting up of the heart and soul to God.

Holy of Holies into Heaven !

Prayer is called a *lifting up of the soul* and of the heart, *Psal. 25. 1. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul*, i. e. to thee do I pray. So *Psal. 86. 4.* and *143. 8.* The work of Prayer being not so much to lift up eyes, and hands, and voyce, as to lift up the heart and soul ; and as if we had not prayed, when our spirits were not elevated. Surely that work whereby the souls of Gods Suppliants, when sinking, when cleaving to the dust, are raised up, is a great work; yet *Hannahs* prayer did it, *She looked no more sad*, *1 Sam. 1. 15. 18.* compared. The like lift was *Dauids* prayer to him, in that sad plight, from under those grievous weights upon his spirit, *Psal. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8.* yea, hereby Gods Suppliants do get above worldly cares, tears, and distractions, *Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing* ( meaning inordinately ) *but in every thing make your request known by Prayer, &c. And the peace of God &c. shall keep your hearts and mindes.* The work of Prayer is not to move or remove God, he is in one mind, he is still the same, but to move and remove our hearts neer to the Lord; and then have we prayed to purpose, when by prayer our hearts and spirit are in a more sublime and celestial frame when we are more above Natural, Carnal and formal selfe ; when more off and above the world, and all the encouragements and discouragements of it ; when in and by Prayer wee have recovered, yea, haply ex-  
ccede

ceeded our former lively apprehensions of, and affections to the Lord Jesus, our former strength and bent of spirit, to his favour and ways, &c. For then our hearts are indeed lifted up : yea, prayer is not only a lifting up of the heart *effectivè*, because when duly performed it doth thus lift it up, but it is so *formaliter*, because the very form, nature, and essence of a Spiritual prayer lieth and consisteth in the heavenly movings, workings, and approvings of the mind and heart, as spiritual toward God and Christ, in the several expressions of their desires. Gracious suppliants, as such, they *mount up with wings as Eagles*, *Esa. 40. 31.* They approach to the Lord, *Jer. 30. 21.* Draw neer to the Lord, *Psal. 73. 28.* They fly to heaven for refuge, *Heb. 6. 18.* They fly to the Lord for refuge. *David*, who in *Psal. 143. 8.* pleadeth for favour and salvation, because hee lifted up his soul to the Lord, in the ninth verse reneweth his plea in this expression, because he did *fly to the Lord to hide him.*

Prayer is called *meditation*, *Psa. 5. 1. Consider my meditation,* (i. e.) my prayer, *Gen. 24. 63* Isaac *went out to meditate*, or to pray; so that prayer is not lip-labour, if rightly performed, but it is a work of the mind exercised herein : It is blamed in Hypocrites worship, and prayer, which is therefore accounted null, vaine, that they *draw neer with their lips, but their hearts are far from*

4 Prayer a  
Meditation.

God, Esa. 29. 13. Prayer in the rife of it is a studied work : many a thought ſpent before hand about the ſins which the Saints confeſs, about the wants which they expreſs, upon the mercies which they do acknowledge ; upon the purity, majeſty, immenſity, all-ſufficiency, fidelity, and bounty, &c. of the Lord, to whom they pray ; the beauty and fulneſs, &c. of the Lord Jeſus, in whoſe name they pray ; yea immediately before they pray they have their preparatory muſing of what, of whom, and through whom they are to aſk, and as they are praying, their minds are attent and intent upon what they pray for ; yea they uſher in their expreſſions in prayer.

3 Prayer a  
talking with  
God.

Prayer is called *a talking with God*. Job 15. 4. thou reſtrainest [ שיחה ] *talking* before the Lord, *Pſal.* 55. 17. evening and morning, and at noon, אשיחה will I *talk*, or pray, *Pſal.* 64. 1. hear my voyce O my God, בנשי in my *talk*, or prayer ; the Hebrew word is uſed to ſignifie ſome ſtudied, excogitated thing in the mind, *Amos* 4. 13. he telleth to man what is his [ Secho ] *his thought*, or ſome ſerious ſollicitous diſcourſe, 1 *King.* 18. 27. he *talketh*, שח, the Saints in prayer doe familiarly commune with the Lord, as *Abraham* did in his petitioning of the Lord, *Gen.* 18. end. But yet are they very ſerious, and intent in this their holy diſcourſe with the Lord, and though they do wrangle with the Lord in their pleas, in  
prayer,



Prayer, yet do they not tumultuously wrangle with him, but their spirits are still and calm, as but talking with the Lord.

Prayer is a secret, silent, submissive *whispering*, Isa. 26. 16. they have powred out, *וְנָחַלְתִּי בְּלִבִּי* a softly speaking, the word is used of their muttering, when *Dauids* childe was dead, 2 Sam. 12. 19. True suppliants they are so sensible of their own vileness, and troubled about their own unworthiness, that they are in a holy wise afraid and ashamed to speak out to the Lord, as sometime *Ezra* was, Chap. 9. 6. yet through faith doe they eye the Lord as one so near them, that it sufficeth them to *whisper* to him the desires and ailes of their hearts; and as one so faithfull that hee will wisely consider of what they thus impart to him. The Hebrew word is sometimes used for charming, Jer. 8. 17. Serpents, to whom there is no *charming*, *וְנָחַלְתִּי*, or which will not bee *charmed*.

6 Prayer an holy whispering.

But verily a godly mans prayer is oft-times such a spirituall charming of serpentine diuellish suggestions, yea and of these inward vile distempers and lusts, which Satan too oft maketh use of to insnare them, that they do even bring them under command, and allay by grace, the height and the heat of them, they even pray down blasphemous atheistical thoughts, or a lust of the world, &c.

Prayer is called a *wrestling with the Lord*, in Gen. 32. 24. 25. There was a mutuall wrestling

7 Prayer an holy wrestling

wrestling of the Lord's with *Jacob*, which was by divine tentations, of *Jacob's* with the Lord, and such as whereby he prevailed over him, and that was his supplication or prayer, as *Hosea*, Chap. 12. 4. expounds it, *hee prevailed over the Angel, hee wept and made supplication*, Col. 4. 12. *alwayes wrestling for you in Prayers*, ἀγωνίζομαι, *striving*, as they did for Masteries in the Olympick-games, and *Rom.* 15. 30. *Striving together with mee in Prayer*. Praying-work is wrestling-work; cross and harsh to the flesh and blood. The Saints are put to it by their unregenerate part to strive with that, to get into a praying frame, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*: yea with Satan too, *Eph.* 6. 12. And when got into such a frame, here is much conflicting with the enemies of Prayer, to keep in it; but as if this were a small matter, a suppliant hath God himself to wrestle with; *And who is sufficient for these things?* We had need indeed, with praying *Jacob*, of Gods strength, that thereby wee may prevail with him, *Hos.* 12. 3. and *by his strength* (God's strength) *hee had power with God*: The Lord is willing to forgive, ready to helpe and heare, yet hee delighteth to try his owne strength of grace in his people; The strength of their faith in Christ, and in his Covenant; the strength of their holy desires and pleas, &c. When such holy strength is put forth in Prayer,

the Prayer, then wee pray indeed, for then wee  
 wrestle. When in Prayer wee close with the  
 Lord, get fast hold of him, of his grace,  
 goodnes, power, and truth, or the like; and  
 keep our hold so fast, and so long that we are  
 got within him, (as I may say) that we have  
 him where we would have him; (as I may  
 say) that we get our spiritualized wils of him;  
 that he expresseth a holy yeelding to heare  
 and help us, so as that thereby our very hearts  
 are cheared, quickned and quieted by it;  
 Now have wee prayed, for we have wrestled  
 to purpose. And for this end, that our pray-  
 ing may be such indeed, or that it may bee  
 wrestling, conscience is to bee made of pre-  
 paration, as for wrestling, 1 Cor. 9. 25. to bee  
 temperate in all things, forbearing any inor-  
 dinacies of cares, fears, desires, delights, im-  
 ployments, and to dyet our selves, feed and  
 delight our selves in such sort as may fit us  
 for Prayer. To exercise our selves in holy  
 ejaculatory prayers, and holy meditations, &  
 to get our souls well oyled, and suppled by  
 the praying graces of the Spirit beforehand.

Prayer is a *serving of God*, and a *serving*  
*of God in the Spirit*, Act. 26. 7. *Our Tribes in-*  
*stantly serving God night and day*; that is,  
 praying, Rom. 1. 9. *My God whom I serve in*  
*my spirit*, that is, to whom I pray. A  
 Suppliants prayer is to him his onely worke  
 and business, such as if hee had then no-  
 thing to do beside; yea, it is his Lord and  
 Masters business, which hee in obedience to

his

8 Prayer a ser-  
 ving God in  
 the spirit.

his command is ready to attend, a business to be done with all his might, he loveth to make something of it before he leaveth it; if hee seems sometimes to idle out his time in distractions and distempers, how grievous is it to such an one to seem to have lost such a morning or evening without doing any thing of moment for the Lord, for his own soul, or others? He loveth to get him a heat at this holy work, to pray whilest his heart bee well warmed; nor is the Lord wont to bee behinde-hand with any such as so serve him; hee payeth them best in holy recompences of his grace, in them which pray most to him. The people concluded that *Jonathan* had wrought with God that day (wrestled, prayed hard) when they saw so apparently the stamp of God imprinted upon that victory given in to him, and by him, 1 *Sam.* 14. 45. yea verily it is no small reward to the Suppliants of God, that the Lord doth account, that when they are praying to him, they are serving of him; when they are telling him of their spiritual wants and inabilities to do him service, confessing their failings in his service, and what unprofitable unthankfull servants they have been to him; how the Lord reckoneth they are doing him very acceptable service; the poor Saints are ready to complain that they can do God no service, &c. No, Can you beg? Can you pray? This is service of God indeed.

Prayer

Prayer in the manner of carrying it on, is an holy serving of the Lord; how awfull is a Suppliant! he serveth the Lord with fear and trembling, whilst praying; how humble is hee, he is carefull to keep his distance even in talking thus with the Lord, *Gen. 18.* *Abraham* then telleth the Lord hee is but *dust*. Prayer also in the intents and desires of the Suppliant it is serving the Lord, all that which a true Suppliant fetcheth of God in Prayer, if you resolve it into its last end, it is service. Hee prayeth for outward things, as *Jacob*, *Gen. 28.* For parts and gifts, as *Solomon*, *1 King. 3.* For life and health, for deliverance out of divers afflictions, outward and inward, as *Hezekiah*, *Isa. 38.* and *David* oft; but in all, it is that hee might serve the Lord, and glorifie him the more thereby; he cometh with a servantly spirit, for mercy from God, ready pressed to do any work of his, to attend any command of his, *Psal. 123. 1, 2.* A praying frame is an obediential frame, a command of God bringeth a true Suppliant upon his knees, and on his knees he waiteth for a command from him.

Prayer is called *knocking*, namely at the door of Gods grace and mercy in Christ, (as it is called in Scripture) *Matth. 7.* *Knock and it shall bee opened unto you.* Prayer is a holy approaching, and repairing to the door of mercy for all manner of supplies of grace which the Saints stand in need of; the

9 Prayer a  
spiritual knock-  
ing.



the Saints rest not in this, that there is a door of Grace, that there is mercy for sinners to be had in Christ, but they are conscionable in the use of this holy means of opening the same; mercy is freely promised to the people of God, yet may none rush into the door of God under pretence that it is open, without knocking, *Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27, &c.* The door of Grace is set very open, *I will pour clean water upon you, &c.* but verse 37. *For this will I be sought by the house of Israel.* Prayer acknowledgeth the Lords prerogative royal. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, Prov. 3.* True suppliants eye the Lord as a great God, as well as gracious, and therefore are willing to keep their due distances: though the Saints be the friends of Christ and of God, who may make in a holy wise, bold with him, yet it is holy manners to them not rudely to press upon his favour, or challenge this or that benefit of it without asking leave. Indeed pinching extremities will make them put a good face upon it, and not continue walking to and againe aloof off, within some general view of mercy, but to knock. and knock again and again at mercies door, to pray often for the opening thereof to them. True suppliants are in haste, of earnest and weighty affairs in their converses with the Lord, they have much to do with him, much to say to him, much to receive from him, & therefore they must, they will knock; they  
are

are sure that a gracious Father of theirs is within, yea within hearing; and therefore they cannot but thus knock and pray. True it is, sometimes this door of Grace seemeth to be shut against them in some displeasure, but yet this maketh them the more earnest, --- *Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* *Psa 77.9. Luk. 11. Trouble me not, for I am in bed* (saith the friend within;) but yet see what prevailing importunity he useth, so that for his importunity the friend riseth, openeth, and giveth what is desired.

What is prayer, but a spiritual knocking, a special means of opening of the gate and door of Grace; and so of all the lesser wickets (as it were) thereon depending. Hence *Psal. 119. 169. Let my cry come before thee* (saith the Psalmist:) and *vers. 170. Let my supplications come before thee*; as if he would say, Open Lord to prayer, let it come in, let not that stand without: or as if it were a plea; Lord, Prayer is at the door, therefore open. So *Psal. 88. 2. Let my Prayer come before thee*, or come where thou art, and *Psal. 55. 1. David praieth that the Lord would not hide himself from his supplications*. Prayer it will come in where the Lord is, will look him out (as it were) in all corners, *Psal. 66. 10. David blesteth the Lord that hee had not turned away his prayer*. Prayer standeth still at Gods door, it will not away without its errand and answer.

Wisdomes out-doors, even the Ordinances,

nances, *Prov. 8. 34.* These are opened by Prayer: Out-lary Gentiles fare the better this way for that Prayer, *Psalms 67. Let thy way bee known among the people, thy saving health among all Nations, Matth. 9. and Pray the Lord of the Harvest, that hee would thrust out Labourers into his Harvest.* Prayer helpeth people to a fruitfull Ministry, Prayer helpeth to open the Ministers mouth, openeth a door of utterance, *Col. 4. 3.* Pray that God would open my mouth. Prayer openeth a door of faith, *1 Cor. 16. 8, 9.* The mystery of Salvation may bee made known by it, *Ephes. 6. 19.* The Word may come to have an open and effectual passage into peoples hearts by it. Hence that *2 Thess. 3. 1.* Pray that the Word may have a free course and be glorified, &c. The door of Liberty, the Churches Liberties may bee opened to the Prayer of the Saints, as to *Paul*, upon his Prayer, *Acts 11.* Those strong and secret doors of death may bee opened by Prayer. Hence the Prophets raising of the dead child by prayer, *2 King. 4. 32, 33, 34, 35.* So *Jonah* by prayer had the belly of Hell, the Whales belly and jaws opened to him, to let him out, *Jonah 2. 9, 10.* By Prayer the doors of the womb (as they are called *Job. 3. 10*) are opened, as in *Hannahs* case, *1 Sam. 1. 15, 16, 20.* and *Rebecca's*, *Gen. 25. 21.* and *Elizabeth's* case, *Luke 1. 13.* By prayer the doors of Heaven are opened. *If I shut heaven, and my people pray, &c. I will hear, &c.*  
2 Chron.

by 2 Chron. 6. 26. and 7. 13, 14. By prayer the  
 Prison doors are opened, as to Peter, upon the  
 Churches prayer, Acts 12. 5. 10. Secrets  
 which otherwise are not to bee opened, yet  
 are to be unfolded by prayer, Dan. 2. 18, 19.  
 Then was the *secret revealed*, upon prayer  
 for the mercies of heaven that way; yea,  
 prayer will open even Hell gates (as I may  
 say;) as by *Luthers* prayer one was reco-  
 vered who had even given his soul to the  
 Devil: This kind of Devil goeth not out  
 but by prayer and fasting, Matth. 17. by fa-  
 sting and prayer then even such a Devil is  
 cast out, and a poor man let goe out of his  
 possession. As in other knocking there is  
 a hand, there are fingers which make a  
 noyse and help open the door; so here there  
 is a hand of faith which knocketh, and that  
 wil open that large gate and door of mercy,  
 and any of the lesler wickets depending,  
 Mat. 15. 28. *O woman, great is thy faith, bee  
 it unto thee even as thou wilt*; Come into all  
 my treasures of Grace, and take even what  
 thou desirest. Godly desires knock and make  
 a noyse in Gods ears, and he opens to them,  
*Hee heareth the desire of the humb'le*, Psal. 10.  
 17. They will come in where the Lord is,  
 Pia. 38 9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee*: The  
 Saints sighs make a noyse at Heaven gates,  
 and God cometh forth to them. *For the  
 sighing of the Prisoners, I will arise, saith the  
 Lord*, Psal. 12. 5. and Psal. 79. 11. *Let the  
 sighing of the prisoners come before thee*, room

for the sighing of the prisoners, Lord ; yea, their very tears too make a loud noyle at this door, and they have their voyce also in prayer, *Thou hast heard the voyce of my weeping*, Psa. 6. 8. No wonder then that effectual prayer consisting of all these, bee indeed a knocking, and means of opening of the gate and door of mercy in Jesus Christ. We pass by other names given to prayer, as that of seeking, asking, calling, opening of the mouth wide, running to the Lord for counsel, referring ones case to him, & the like. Come we now to give a description of prayer.

A general description of Prayer.

Prayer is a Spiritual and faithfull opening of the heart to God in the name of Christ with an eye to seasonable help and relie from him. By [ heart ] we mean thoughts, desires, affections ; these wants, and weaknesses, and sins to which the heart is privy and of which it is sensible. We call it an [ opening of the heart ] in opposition to hypocritical covering, and attempts to hide any thing from the Lord, whereby their prayers become no prayers, their Worship vain whilst digging deep to *hide the counsels of the heart from God*, Isa. 29. 13. 15. compared with *Psal. 119. 26. I have declared my ways to thee*, (that is, prayed) *and thou hast heardst mee*. Prayer is a shewing of God our ways, or as the Hebrew word beareth a telling or counting them one by one, and if we pray indeed, when wee do from our hearts deal plainly and punctually with God there



therein, when we leave out nothing which we know by our selves, untold before him, even in a particular manner, whether respecting our wants, our sins, or the like; so *Psal. 38. 18. I have declared mine iniquity,* meaning all and each of his sins, there were some more special sins, sins which were chiefly his; the Hebrew word signifieth a telling of some new thing. *Dauids* prayer and confession is not a high-way, rode, and some one track of confession, but it is a telling him of any new fresh acts of sin, *Ier. 20. 12. To thee have I opened my cause,* or prayed to thee. Prayer is an opening of the souls causes and cases to the Lord; the same word in another conjugation is used for uncovering, making bare and naked, *Gen. 9. 21.* The Saints in prayer do, or should nakedly present their souls causes without all coverthames, or so much as a ragge of self, or flesh, cleaving to them.

*All things are naked to him with whom wee have to doe,* hee is privy to our secrets; how is prayer an opening of the heart to him?

Suppliants are said in prayer to open their hearts to God.

I In that they doe not, dare not goe about to hide, or desire that ought in their hearts should bee hid from the Lord. It is their desire hee should, and they are very glad that he doth know all their heart, their hearts are ready to break, when they

Object.

Answ.

I.

through temptation or desertion, want prayer vent.

2 In that it is their desire and endeavour to present all within their hearts, which God by a general eye of wisdom, and omniscience seeth, unto a more special, energetical view of the eye of Gods compassion, and love, *Psal. 80. 14. Behold and visit this vine*, Psalm 119. 132. *Look upon me as thou usest to doe on those that fear thy name*, Isaiah 63. 15, 16. *Look down from Heaven, &c. where are the sounding of the bowels? &c.*

3 In that they doe thus in way of an ordinance of God, which hee doth eye and own, as opening of their heart to God. *Psal. 62. 8. Pour out your heart to him*, or pray to him. And albeit their hearts are open to God before, yet not actually opened, in the way of injoynd expressing the same, they do thus pray.

4 In that when prayer is duly performed as their mindes and hearts are uttered and poured out as before the Lords face, *Psal. 62. 8.* or before him; so are they in lively manner quickned to behold Gods mercy, and energetical view of the same; hence that perswasion of *David*, *All my desires are before thee*, *Psal. 38. 9.*

[ It is a spiritual opening. ] Spiritual, in respect of the efficient and working cause Gods Spirit acteth and worketh thereby. It is prayer in the Holy Ghost, *Rom. 8. 26.*

*The spirit maketh intercession in us*: the spirit of prayer is acted in it, *Zach. 12. 10.* Prayer is called ἐνεργησμέν, in-wrought, our spirits also as acted and improved thereby are at work in it, *My God, whom I serve with my spirit, Rom. 1. 9.* Our hearts are as water poured out to wait along each petition, and confession, or as Oyl, to annoynt these messengers of the soul, that they might fly the faster to Gods throne. It is spiritual in the matter of it, things of Gods Kingdome, *Matth. 6. 33.* or if other things, yet under a Spiritual consideration, as according to Gods will, and for his glory. Spiritual in the manner, namely in a sublime and elevated manner of performance, *Isa. 37. 4. Lift up thy prayer.* Spiritual in the end, a calling upon God whereby hee is exalted, *Isaiah 12. 4.* Spiritual in the motive and ground-work, a Command of God requiring, a Promise in encouraging; *Thou shalt seek my face, my heart answered, Lord thy face will I seek, Psalm 27. 8. for thou revealedst to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer, 2 Sam. 27. 27.* Faithful opening ] that is, unfeigned, without reservations, &c. Prayer from unfeigned lips, *Psal. 17. 1.* [To God,] not to Saints and Angels, which neither know our hearts, nor can help us, *Isa. 63. 16. Though Abraham know thee not.* And it is to God, not as into the aire,

or as at an uncertainty, where, or to whom. [ In the name of Christ, ] There is a holy renouncing of our selves, and our own worth and strength, and a resting, and trusting upon the Lord Jesus only, through whom we come to the throne of Grace, and for whose sake alone wee plead for, and expect audience and acceptance, yea and assistance.

[ With an eye to seasonable help ; ]  
*Our eyes are unto the Lord, until hee shew us mercy, Psal. 123. 1, 2.*

Thus much concerning Prayer in general.

Reasons why  
 we must pray.

1 From God.

2 From Christ.

3 From the  
 Spirit.

4 From the  
 Saints.

1 Their necessity.

2 Their engagements.

We might give sundry reasons to inforce this duty ; taken,

1 From God, absolutely and relatively considered, who is thereby improved and honoured. And secondly ; from Christ, whose Office it is to take these sufferings from his people, and present them before his Father ; and who hath through many difficulties made this way for his people, that they may freely and familiarly thus talk with God, and open their wants to him. Thirdly, from the Spirit of God, whose Office among other things, it is, to help and enable the Saints to the conscionable performance of this duty. Fourthly, from the Saints themselves.

1 Their necessities call for it.

2 Their manifold engagements to the Lord, require it.

3 They

3 They have praying Graces inabling them to it, as 1 Faith, Prayer, is in this respect also, the prayer of faith, *7am. 5. 15.* Faith is an emptying Grace, giveth the most sensible and lively view of the souls wants, and nothingness, to supply them otherwise; presenteth the Lord in all his freeness, fulness, and faithfulness, for the souls suitable supply.

3 The praying graces, as  
1 Faith.

Secondly, Love, *Psal. 116. 1. I love the Lord, therefore will I call upon him,* or pray; Love of the Lord filleth the Soul with desires, and breathings after union, and communion with him, whom the soul loveth, *Cantic. 3. 1. and 4. 16. Let my beloved come into his garden.* Love is open hearted, would unbowel the soul to her Lover Jesus Christ, and to the Father, by him: love is fruitful, and in holy wise eloquent in its gracious expressions to him.

2 Love.

Thirdly, Zeal; this is attended with vehement desires, *2 Cor. 7. 11. yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal?* that blessed fire will cause such holy smoke in the weakest Christian, *Isa. 42. 3.* and that will soone sparkle out in holy supplications, that will bee mounting upward, spiritualizing and lifting up the heart thus heaven-ward.

3 Zeal.

Fourthly, holy jealousy and fear of God, (wee may put them together) thou castest off fear, thou restrainest prayer: unless fear bee thrust out of doors, that will put the soul upon prayer; other jealousy fills

4 Jealousie.



mens heads and hearts with motions, so doth holy jealousie with praying motions and matter. The more wee suspect our selves, the more are wee in these holy inquiries of God. Holy jealousie is an utter enemy to carnal security: presumption, selffulness and confidence, the very bane of prayer.

4 Spiritual calling.

4 Their Spiritual calling as Saints, calleth for their drawing thus neer to God, for their offering up these spiritual Sacrifices and Offerings, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 2 5. As being Spiritual Priests, yea as Sons and Children, they must thus own their Father, in crying Abba, Father, Gal. 4. 6. and as Subjects honour their blessed King, by becoming his humble petitioners; the beleiving penitent Thief upon the Cross performed this as his homage to Jesus Christ, as King of Saints, he prayeth, Lord remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdome, Luke 22 43.*

5 From the enemies of prayer.

The fifth Reason may be taken from the enemies of Prayer, the Devil, Flesh, the World; which oppose the same upon all occasions, and seek in special sort to hinder the conscionable practise of it, (as might bee shewed in many particulars) so that it the more concerneth us to attend it, else would not they bee so busie to divert us from it, or distract, or discourage us in it.

6 From prayer itself.

The sixth Reason may bee taken from prayer:

Prayer it self as spiritually performed, in that it is so acceptable to the Lord, so prevailing with him, unto admiration, for any thing which is according to his will (as might bee abundantly shewed in particular instances.) But in as much as in handling the particular kindes of Prayer, wee have more occasion to press upon the conscience, wee shall here but name such things as might inforce to the duty.

Let us only now make one use of what hath been said, and that in way of Reproof of Gods own professing people, who are too ready also, to neglect and omit this duty of Prayer, *Isa. 43, 21, 23. But thou hast not called upon mee, O Jacob*; that was very grievous to God, when a people whom hee hath severed into Church estate, with an aime at his praise, as verse 21. yet they should neglect to honour him in conscionable calling upon him. Such as we are, are looked upon by others, as a praying people, but ah, that the world were not mistaken in us; what wonder is it if many Professors excell no more in the things of God, if they are not much in Prayer! One of the Ancients used to say, if I see a man not delighting in Prayer, I conclude hee is one of no inward Excellencies; Nay, is it any wonder to see many Congregations, rather Spirals of poor decrepit, decayed, diseased Christians, than Gardens, where are goodly fragrant thriving plants? As the body without the

Use, Reproving  
neglect of  
Prayer.

soul

soul is dead, unserviceable, yea stinketh in others nostrils, so are wee as loathsome in Gods sight, without the true exercise of prayer, which (as some have called it) is (as it were) the soul of our souls: Some of the Ancients have called Prayer the physick of the soul; and truly such it is, it will by the blessing of God, purge, heal, recover, quicken, and strengthen a very weakly Christian, as experience witnesseth. But what will become of other distempered, relapsed Professors, who use not this holy course of physick, is it wonder that such dye, become twice dead? Some have called Prayer the Sun and light of the soul, and truly in a sense it is so; but how darkly and sadly must they needs walk, and how often will they bee stumbling and falling dangerously? How little spiritual work will they do for Christ, in whose Horizon this Sun of Prayer is setting, if not already set, and from whom this lightsome, and life-giving Ordinance is removed? Others have called Prayer the nerves and sinews of the soul, and truly so it is; Prayer holdeth altogether in us, keepeth all in due place and strength; and they must needs grow loose and weak, who make not continual use thereof upon all occasions. But that this admonition bee not as an arrow shot at Rovers, let us shew first some symptoms of this spiritual evill of omission of Prayer: and so who are the persons concerned herein, and shew some particular

particular branches of the evill of it.

Touching the former, first such are surely careless of drawing near to God, who are not pliable to the whole will of God, *Zeph.*

3.2. *Shee obeyed not the voyce, shee drew not near to her God.* Conscionable praying would inure us from our hearts to say, *Thy will be done*, and accordingly in heart to endeavour it.

2 Such omit prayer, who walk not humbly in afflictions; Such as are full of impatience, discontent, tumultuousness of spirit, and the like; *Shee received not correction, shee drew not near to her God*, *ibid.* *Eliphaz* gathered that *Job* was neglectful of prayer, because so querulous, and (as hee thought) *re- pinning at Gods dealings with him*, *Job* 15.3, 4.5. &c. *Surely thou casteth off fear, and thou restrainest Prayer; should a wise man dispute with words not comely? &c.*

3 Such omit prayer, who are ready upon every occasion to distrust God in his promise or providence, *Zeph.* 3.2. *Shee trusted not in the Lord, shee drew not near to her God.*

4 When Professors are so very hard to bee convinced of a sin, as sins of worldliness, pride, oppression, error, impatience, and the rest, *Job* 15.4. *Thou casteth off fear, Thou restrainest prayer, for thy mouth declar- eth thine iniquity, seeing thou hast chosen the tongue of the crafty*, *verf. 5.* To evade and avoid the just imputations (as hee thought)

Signs of neg-  
lect of Praier  
1 Disobedience

2 Impatience.

3 Distrust.

4 Hardness of  
heart.

of

of hypocrisie. This argueth also omission of Prayer.

5 Oppression.

5 So is oppression one of another, an Argument thereof. *Psal. 53. 4. They eat up my people, they call not upon God.*

6 Backsliding.

6 Backsliding, and Lukewarmness in Religion, also argueth the same; these two are joyned, *Zeph. 1. 6. Such as are turned back from the Lord, and those that have not sought the Lord.* So is that of not inquiring after him, namely of his Servants. I fear these backsliding times are not such praying times as formerly.

7 Sad temptations.

7 The sad temptations which are too rife among Professors, argue omission and neglect of prayer. *Watch and pray, that yee enter not into temptation, Matth. 26. 41.* Yea, but it appeared, that against that third admonition of Christ, they did neglect to do it; yea, *Peter* who was personally admonished. *What Peter, Couldst not thou watch?* But ah, the advantages which presently Satan got against the Disciples, and against *Peter* above all the rest; witness his third denial of Christ. In a word, The little success we oft-times finde in our weighty endeavours, argueth that wee ask not, and therefore have not any choice blessing thereon, *Jam 4. 2. Yee war and get nothing, because yee ask nothing.*

8 Denial of blessings.

Touching the second thing, the case of such persons is sad, both in respect,

Evils of sin in neglect of prayer.

1 Of Evils of sin, accompanying the same.

1 Such



1 Such are far from experimental knowledge of God, and of his wayes, *The heathen that know not God, who call not upon him,* Jer. 10.24. 1 Ignorance.

2 Such are secretly Hypocrites, yea very Atheists, who make not conscience of Prayer: It is the Atheist in heart, who in his heart saith, *There is no God,* Psal. 53. 1. *Who calleth not upon God,* vers. 4. 2 Hypocrisie.

3 Such are under some deep measure of hardness of heart, yea, of wilfull hardening themselves; they cast out all motions in them, arising from any fear of God, who restrains Prayer. 3 Stupidity.

4 Such are in a ready way to blaspheme God and his wayes, *Job 21.15. What is the Almighty that wee should fear him, or what profit should wee have if wee pray to him?* they are in a ready way to cast God quite out of their thoughts, *Psal. 10. 4.* these two are joyned, *Hee will not seek after God, God is not in all his thoughts.* 4 Contempt of God.

But at best, 5. Such are surely weary of God. *Thou hast not called upon mee, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of mee, O Israel,* Isa. 43. 22. And what a sin and shame is it to be carelessly weary of God, *the God of our Mercy?* Micah 6. 3. 5 Weariness of God.

2 The case of such who omit and neglect Prayer, is sad, in respect of the *Evil of sorrow.* Such as call not upon God, are oftentimes in causeless horrors, and have little quiet, or peace in their spirits, *Psalms. 53.*

45. *They call not upon God, and then are they in fear where no fear is : And to say no more, Such will in time, come under that dreadful imprecation, Jer. 10. 25. Pour out thy wrath upon the families which call not upon thy Name, and so may come to lye open to a more full measure of the wrath of the Almighty than other men. And so much of Prayer in General.*

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## CHAP. II.

*Of the diverse kinds of Prayer.  
And first of Ejaculatory  
Prayer.*

**H**AVING spoken of Prayer in General, we come now to speak of the species and sorts of Prayer; and therein first of sudden or Ejaculatory Prayer; In respect of which, wee may be said to pray, and must also pray *without ceasing*. Hee who enjoyneth us indefinitely to pray without ceasing, commandeth us also to pray in an Ejaculatory way, Eph. 6. 18. *Pray with all Prayer*, or all manner of Prayer, and so this also. Ejaculatory Prayer is either mental onely, or vocal also.

Ejaculatory Prayer *Mental*, is a short, yet serious and sincere lifting up of the hearts desires

desires and ailes unto the Lord ; the minde (as it were) inwardly uttering the same to him. Thus *Jehoshaphat* cryed to the Lord, 2 *Chron.* 18. 31. And thus *Sampson* called upon the Lord, and said, (in Gods hearing, not in the Lads hearing that led him ) *O Lord God remember me, &c.* *Judg.* 16. 28. Thus *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2, 4, 5. prayed unto the God of Heaven, yet the King then present, neither heareth a whisper, nor seeth any motion of his lips, whilst *Nehemiah* is thus speaking a word or two of moment to the King of Kings. *Moses* his mental speaking to God, was a loud cry in the Lords ears ; he spake nothing vocally, yet *Exod.* 14. 15. *Why cryest thou*, saith the Lord ? Belcevers are to God through Christ a Spiritual Temple and house, that within this house also, in the innermost part thereof, this holy incense of Ejaculatory Prayer may bee offered to the Lord with acceptance, 1 *Pet.* 2. 4, 5.

Ejaculatory Prayer vocal, is a holy Apostrophe, or turning ones speech to God Prayer-wise, in some short, yet pithy expressions from what a gracious person is thinking, saying, doing, or suffering. Thus *Jacob* breaks off his continued speech in blessing his sons, turning himself to God. *O Lord I have waited for thy salvation*, *Gen.* 49. 18. So *Isaiah* from threatning the *Assyrians*, *Isa.* 33. 1. turneth Prayer-wise to God, v. 2. *O Lord bee mercifull unto us*. So *Micah* in like sort, Chap. 7. 13, 14. *Feed thy people with thy*

Ejaculatory  
Prayer descri-  
bed.

*thy rod.* Thus Christ breaketh off his speech to his Disciples, and turneth it to his Father, *John 12.26, 27, 28. Father glorifie thy name, &c.* Thus *Luke 22.40, 41, 42.* From reproving his fellow doth the penitent Theef turn his speech to Christ, *Lord remember mee in thy Kingdome.* Thus *Nehemiah* amidst his reforming work, oftentimes turneth him to God thus, *Remember me, O my God, concerning this, &c.* *Nehem. 13, 13, 14 21, 22.*

The excellency  
of Ejaculatory  
Prayer.

It's a Saints  
first breathing.

It is a Saints  
last breathing.

Let us now speak a little of the excellency and necessity of the duty of praying without ceasing in an ejaculatory way, give Reasons for it and apply it. The excellency hereof may appear, both by the Nature, and by the use of it. It is (as I may say) the first breath of a Regenerate man; as soon as a man is born again, hee thus at least cryeth, *Abba Father. In that yee are the Sons of God, he hath sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father, Gal. 4.6.* And when his body breathes its last, this is a gracious persons last breathing. Hence such parting cries of Gods children at the stake, in the flames, amidst the stones, on a Cross, &c. *Lord receive my spirit; into thy hands I commend my spirit.* And such were *Stephen*, who was stoned, calling on the Lord and saying, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit. Lord lay not this sin to their charge.* These last words of the Worthies of God, we account to be most memorable, and to have some

some spiritual excellency instamped upon them, and these words are such like Ejaculations. If it were possible to hear the last whispers of the Saints souls, as ready to leave their bodies, they would be found to be such like breathings of their desire to him to whom they are going. Ejaculatory Prayer also is the first and last of set and solemn Prayer, when rightly performed. God prepareth the heart of the humble to pray acceptably, even by these preparatory listings up of the heart Prayer-wise, *Psal. 10. 17.* The heart is first thus prepared, then the hand that way stretched out, *Job 11. 13.* Look upon *Solomon* in that presidential prayer of his, *1 King. 8. 22.* his hands spread to heaven before hee spake, shewed where his heart was lifted before-hand. The last also of Solemn Prayer, is issued in an Ejaculation, an Ejaculatory *Amen*, comprehending the closing desires, and feeling motions of faith to all before pleaded for. All the prayers of a gracious Suppliant are not ended with his continued speech in prayer; no, his heart is lifting and lifting; as you see a bell-rope oft hoyling up after you have done ringing the bell. Many a long look, and heart with followeth such a ones desire to heaven, and all together come before the Lord for mercy. Hence the Lord, as hee is nigh to them that call upon him, so he filleth the desires of them that fear him, *Psal. 145. 18, 19.* *Solomons* heart was as well left

It is the  $\alpha$  and  $\omega$  of solemn Prayer.



It is the spirits  
of solemn  
prayer.

in Heaven after the end of his Prayer, whereof his fixed eyes there, was a speaking sign ( *1 King. 8. 54.* ) as gotten thither before he began, *ver. 22.* Ejaculatory prayer is the very quintessence of solemn prayer; it is the very spirit into which that is distilled and resolved. When a gracious persons heart is left in Heaven, uttering its after-requests, now prayer was well carried on. These shorter Postscripts written after the other longer letter indited by the Spirit, and directed to the Lord, they have ever something of note and worth. This epitome of prayer, how solid is it? So much for a taste of the nature of it.

It is the echo  
of the spirit.

Let us withall consider of this holy duty of ejaculatory prayer in the spring and rise thereof: and namely, those lively and forceable rebounds of the gracious spirit of a Saint of God, moved by the hand of the Spirit of God. Ejaculatory prayer is the harmonious sweet-sounding echo of the Spirit, fore-speaking to the heart. When thou saidst, *Seek my face*, there is the Lords Voyce; my heart answered, *thy face Lord will I seek*; there is the echo, *Psal. 27. 8.* *David* before he is solemnly praying, as afterward he is, *v. 9. 10.* He turneth his speech to the Lord, telling him what his heavenly desires say, I [ will ] seek thy face, or my hearts desires are so to doe. Ejaculations are the Spiritual ventings and breathings of a gracious heart, filled with the wine of the

It is the vent-  
ing of a heart  
full of the  
spirit.

the spirit, (*Ephes. 5. 19.*) very precious, very pleasant to the taste of the Lord. Sometimes the Saints hearts are so filled with a spirit of holy joy, sometimes of praise, sometimes of love to the Lord, that variety of holy desires pressing fast on, they are forced to give them vent by short ejaculations. Ejaculations are the holy evaporations of a heart thoroughly warmed with some special workings of faith and love of Christ. When *Dauids* heart is thus boyling hot, (*Psal. 45. 1.*) hee breaketh off his discourse from Christ, *verse 2.* and breatheth out such holy desires unto Christ, *verse 3. Gird thy Sword upon thy thigh, &c.* and *verse 4. Ride prosperously.* And then on again to his discourse, *verse 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.* Ejaculations are the holy sparks ascending up one after another, from the stirring of the fired coals of the Spirit in the heart. From the holy admiration of God and his goodness, power, wisdom, faithfulness, &c. proceed holy ejaculations. From that transcendency of Gods dispensations to *Asaphs* reason, who had his hearts fore-discourses about the same, proceeds, that *Verily, or nevertheless God is good to Israel, Psal. 73. 1.* From *Micahs* admiring at the unparallel'd grace of God, *Mic. 7. 18. Who is a God like unto thee?* *vers. 19.* He telleth the Church what God will doe, hee will turn again; and will subdue our iniquities; and then maketh his *Apostrophe* to the Lord,

D 2

Lord [*thou wilt*] cast all their sinnes into the depth of the Sea ; and verſ. 20. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob.* God calleth for theſe holy *Apoſtrophes* from this ground of admiration at his marvellous providences , *Pſal. 66. 3. Say unto God , how terrible art thou in thy works!* The excellency of this fruit , muſt needs partake of the excellency of ſuch a root as is an admiring frame.

Its the firſt  
fruit of a ſpi-  
ritualized  
heart.

Ejaculations ariſe from the ſpiritualizing of the heart upon any occaſion. As when *David* is ſpiritual in contemplation of the works of God, *Pſal. 8. 3. 4. When I conſider thy heavens, &c.* his heart in ejaculatory-wiſe, ſaith , *Lord, What is man that thou art thus mindful of him?* So when hee was in a lively manner muſing upon the immenſity of God, *Pſal. 139. 1. to 17.* Hee thence breaketh out thus , *How precious are thy thoughts to mee, O God!* From the view taken of Gods Juſtice or Mercy , or from any holy diſcourſe with others about the ſame , or from ſinging , and ſounding forth Gods praises , wherein the Saints are ſpiritual, ariſeth ſome holy Ejaculations or other. In all theſe , and each of theſe , was *Deborah* ſo ſpiritual , *Judg. 5.* from verſ. 1. to the laſt , whence that Ejaculatory Prayer of hers , *So let thine enemies periſh , O Lord; but let thoſe that love thee bee like the Sun in its might.* If the Lord breathe upon our hearts at his table , or in his word , the Spirit of God draweth out our hearts to ſend  
ſome

some Ejaculatory lift of Prayer, either in way of Petition, or Thanksgiving, or the like. When the Lord Jesus speaks effectually to *Johns* heart, *I come quickly*, thence springs his ejaculatory *Amen*, *Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, Revel. 22. 20. Christ effectually preaching that hard lesson of brotherly forgiveness; It caused that Ejaculation from them, *Lord increase our faith*, Luke 17. 1, 2, 3, 4. with 5. If *David* hear that word twice, That all power belongs to God, *Psal. 62. 11*. his spirit is elevated to make this short hearty speech, vers. 12. *Also to thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy*. From the Angels lively discourse with *Mary* about Christ, who was to be incarnate, and to bee formed in her; her heart being warmed, shee turneth her speech to the Lord, who sent that his Angel, *Be it to thy servant according to thy word*, Luke 1. 38. So then holy Ejaculations are the very spirits of the spiritual workings of God, or at the leastwise from the Lords spiritualizing of his Saints, in his Providences, or Ordinances, and therefore great in their excellency.

Let us adde another infallible Argument of the excellency of this duty of Ejaculatory Prayer, and that is from the high esteem, and real respects which God himself hath expressed thereof. *Habbakkucks* discourse, Chap. 3. though most what doctrinal, and onely something mentioned in a short way

Is of choice  
respect with  
God.

of petition, *verse 2.* and of praising God, *verse 18, 19.* yet as from the most excellent part in Gods account, it is all called his Prayer, *verse 1.* The penitent Thiefs ejaculation, *Lord remember mee when thou comest into thy Kingdome,* is graciously owned and answered by Jesus Christ. *This day shalt thou bee with me in Paradise,* Luke 23. 41, 42. The Publican ejaculatorily praying, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner,* goeth away justified, Luke 18. 13, 14. yea that ejaculatory *Apostrophe* of Moses to God, *Exodus 5. end,* *Why hast thou so evilly intreated the people?* yet hath its gracious return from the Lord, *cha. 6. 1.* Then said the Lord, *Now shalt thou see what I will doe to Pharaoh.* The Israelites at the Red Sea were so afraid with a distrustful fear, that Moses bids them not to fear, *Exod. 14. 13.* yet being thus afraid, they cried unto the Lord, *verse 10. 12.* and both *Nehemiah*, Chap. 9. 9. and *Joshua*, Chap. 24. 7. testifieth, that God heard that cry of theirs, and put darkness betwixt them and the Egyptians, and drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea. David when in such a hurry of distrust, that hee said to God, *I am cut off from thy sight,* yet saith, *nevertheless thou heardest the voyce of my supplications,* (Psalm 31. 22.) the many short prayers which he then made. Ejaculations are but short breathings of the Saints spirits, but being breathed once, they scarce ever expire in respect of the efficacies



efficacies and issues of them. These short speeches are (as I may say) best remembred, their memorials are of a very long date with the Lord. That grey headed ejaculation of *Noah*, *God perswade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem*, hath had, now hath; and still will have its answer, in the *Gentiles*, of *Japhets* comming into the fellowship with the Church, *Gen.9.27*. The day of judgement [*that day*] although not a season of praying, yet of full answers of such like prayers made with respect to the day. *Pauls* short prayer, *2 Tim.1.18*. *The Lord shew mercy to the house of Onesiphorus*, at [*that day*] shall have then a full return. At that day when the Saints treasures laid up in heaven shall bee opened, these lesser peeces shall have their weight, worth, and use, when it shall bee said, these and these have been the prayers of such and such of the Saints, and these and these are the issues and fruits of them to such and such.

Thus much touching the Excellency of such Ejaculations, now of the necessity thereof. The Saints sudden straits require prayer, but will not afford time for continued prayer: Room now then for Ejaculatory Prayer. At this dead list now *Moses* his cry will doe well, *Exod.14.15*. Then *Jehoshaphat* must hye to heaven, when begirt with blood-thirsty men; in continued prayer hee cannot, but by Ejaculatory prayer he

The necessity  
of Ejaculatory  
Prayer by reason  
of sudden  
straits.

may, *2 Chron. 18. 31.* Then *Jehoshaphat* cry-  
ed to the Lord. Scrabbling is but a poor  
shift for *David*, when known in the presence  
of the King of *Gath*, *2 Sam. 21. 10, 11, 12,*  
*13.* and when no place or space for solemn  
prayer, then welfare Ejaculatory Prayer,  
*Psal. 32.* title, with verse *4, 6.* *I sought the*  
*Lord, and hee heard mee*; this poor man cried,  
and the Lord heard him, and saved him. *Afa*,  
when to joyn battel, thus cried unto the Lord  
his God, with marvellous success, *2 Chron.*  
*14. 11.* *David* in that strait prayeth against  
*Achitophels* counsels, *Lord turn Achitophels*  
*counsel into foolishness*, *2 Sam. 15. 31.* and  
the issue sheweth it took, *2 Sam. 17. 23.*  
*Moses* among a company of murmurers,  
*Exod. 15. 14.* hath none fit to joyn in pray-  
er in a more solemn way, yet verse *25.*  
though hee spake nothing vocally, he cried  
thus effectually, hee cried to the Lord, and  
hee shewed him a tree to make the bitter  
waters sweet; *Philistins* are upon the *Israe-*  
*lites*, then is onely room for *Samuels* Eja-  
culatory cry, *1 Sam. 8. 7 8, 9.* and *Samuel*  
cried unto the Lord, and hee heard him. *He-*  
*zekiahs* deadly sickness will onely give him  
leave to pray thus, *2 King. 20. 1, 2, 3, 7.* hee  
turned his face to the wall and prayed, *O*  
*Lord remember me, &c.* Sudden and strong  
temptations disable *David* to make such con-  
tinued prayer, but he will then make many  
of these Ejaculatory requests, *Psal. 30. 21.*  
Nevertheless thou heardest the cry of me  
[supplica

Temptations.

[*supplications*] when I cryed to thee. Great griefs and prefaces fill the Saints hearts, and lay their speech, but then their hearts burst forth into inutterable sighs and groans, whose meaning the Lord knoweth, *Rom. 8. 26.*

Surely Saints, as men of tender consciences, ever and anon offending in deed, but as frequently smitten in their hearts for it, cannot but bee often put upon it, in the interims of continued prayer, to bespeak mercy and pardon whilest their hearts are thus afflicted, *2 Sam. 24. 10.* And *Dauids* heart smote him for numbring the people, and *David* said unto the Lord, *I have sinned, &c. I beseech thee take away the iniquity of thy servant.* And as sudden faults of ours, so sudden stroaks of God put the Saints upon this, *2 Sam. 24.* When *David* saw the Angel smiting the people, he said, *It is I that have sinned, What have these sheep done?* Sudden injuries from men cause an injured *Jephthah* to make his short appeale to the Lord, saying, *The Lord be Judge betwixt Israel and Ammon,* *Judg. 11. 27.* *Israel* injuriously begirts *Judah*, and no other help for them but this, *Judah* cryed unto the Lord, *2 Chron. 13. 14. 15.* *Pharaoh* with an huge host, hath *Israel* at an advantage, and they must needs then thus cry out unto the Lord. Enemies unexpected scorns of the Saints, put the Saints upon these short appeals, *Nehem. 4. 4, 5.* Hear, O our God, for we are

Failings.

Injuries.

Enemies.

are despised. Their sudden affrighting of them doth as much; they all made us afraid. Now therefore, O our God strengthen my hands. *Neb. 6. 9.* The present hearing of the Prince good will to the Commonwealth, put forth godly Subjects then present to affix their Ejaculatory Amen thereto, *1 Kings 1. 36.* Amen, the Lord thy God say so too. A sudden hand of God upon others, put godly Moses upon it thus to pray for Miriam, *Lord heal her, &c. Numb. 12. 13.* and godly Hezekiah to pray for his people, *The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord, though not so prepared. And the Lord hearkned and healed the people. 2 Chron. 30. 18, 19.* Any sudden notice of some special service of God, unto which some of the Saints are addressing themselves, must needs put others that hear thereof, by such sudden lifts of their hearts to give them a lift therein. Is David going to a solemn Sacrifice, godly Arannah will thus wish him good speed, *2 Sam. 24. 23.* The Lord thy God accept thee. Eli perceiving Hannahs Prayer-busines, *1 Sam. 1. 16.* cannot but add his fiat also, *vers. 17.* The God of Israel grant thee thy Petition. Sudden weighty changes of some of the Saints in their outward condition, put others that hear of it upon this holy service of love to them, as Boaz his godly neighbours, *Ruth 4. 11, 12.* The Lord make this woman like Rachel and Leah, &c. Sudden and unexpected kindnesses

Judgements of  
God.

Special services

Changes

Kindnesses  
of others

nesses shewed to the Saints, will put them to speed such a kinde of Messenger as this to Heaven, presently to tell their Father of it, *Ruth 2. 19, 20. Naomi* seeing *Boaz* his kindness to his daughter *Ruth*, saith, *Blessed be he of the Lord, that hath not left off his kindness to the living, and to the dead.* Besides, even one Ejaculation of the Saints, puts them upon making more, upon praying thus also without ceasing. One Ejaculation begetteth another, *Isa. 26. 9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night, yea, with my spirit within mee will I seek thee early;* because they had thus prayed, they will pray yet more. *Psal. 62. 1. Hear my cry, attend to my prayer;* (yet no words thereof mentioned) and *vers. 2. From the end of the earth will I cry;* Hee had thus cryed, and hee will therefore cry again and again: As billows of temptation ever and anon stop his mouth and interrupt him, so as hee now and then doth but peep above water, and get breathing space; he will thus cry, *Lead me, or guide me, or carry me to yonder rock which is higher than I.* Hence *Jonah* in his perishing condition, mentioneth his Prayers (plurally) there were many of these short Prayers like Messengers sent Poste in some great and present stress one after the other, to speed succour from heaven, *Jon. 2. 1, 2, 7. My [Prayers] came in unto thee.*

Yea, these holy Traders with Heaven, using to make as quick returns, as speedy dealings

Continuation  
of Prayer.



dealings thus with the Lord; as they gain upon the Lord, they are suddenly sending for more, and bespeaking yet more blessing from him. When *Moses* by his short Prayer hath got a grant of God, *My presence shall go with thee* (*Exod. 33. 12, 13, 15, 16.* compared) then doth hee in a holy wise grow up to God. He hath one short, yet no small request more, *vers. 18. I beseech thee shew me thy glory.* And *Chap. 34. 9.* he hath another request yet more, *Pardon our iniquities, and take us for thine inheritance.* So *Abrahams* short requests as they are granted, *Gen. 18.* so they multiply, *if there be fifty, Lord, in Sodom wilt thou not spare it?* and then if but *forty five*, then if *forty*, then if *thirty*, then if *twenty*, then if *ten*.

Thus much also be spoken to shew the necessity of this Duty in sundry respects. Let us now briefly adde a Reason or two, yet further to inforce this duty.

Reasons why  
1 From the  
honour it puts  
on God.

In his Immen-  
sity and Om-  
niscience.

The first is taken from the nature and property of this duty, which honoureth the Lord in a special manner, as a glorious Spirit, which needeth not any words of ours to express what we would to him. Hee can hear the holy language and speech of our spirits; he understandeth the meaning of sighs not to be expressed, *Rom. 8. 26.* Ejaculatory Prayer proclaimeth the Lord, that hee is not as the Idol gods, who needeth not to be awakened by loud out-cries, as *1 Kings 18. 27.* as *Elijah* derided *Baals*

Priests

Priests, wisheth them to *cry aloud, &c.* Who needeth not to bee carried up and down as dunghill gods do, *Jer. 10. 5.* No, this proclaimeth to all the world, that the God of the Saints is an All-seeing God, espousing the least moving of their desires to him, that he is in all, and through all, and filleth every place; yea, that hee is a very present help at any dead lift; that he is a God hearing Prayers, all sorts of Prayers, the shortest of them. If *Ephraim* but lisp and whisper out, *Turn thou mee, and I shall be turned, &c.* God saith, *I have surely heard him*, *Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.* If *Israel* take unto them words Prayer-wise, though but short, *Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, &c.* God can, and will say, *I have surely heard him, and observed him*, *Hos. 14. 1. 2, 3, 8.* This glorifieth him, as one who assuredly waits to bee gracious, that any such cry and whisper as this is of the Saints, is attended by him, *Isa. 30. 18. The Lord waits to be gracious*; and verse 19. is a demonstration thereof, *The Lord will bee very gracious at the voyce of thy cry.*

The second Reason is taken from the precious fruits of the conscionable exercise of this duty; of such sudden and short lifts of the heart to the Lord.

1 It is a very special means to keep our hearts very spiritual, and savoury, when so often in heaven, taking some short turns with God, and *Jesus Christ*. When so oft with

2 From the fruits of it. Its a means

1 to keep us spiritual.

with God, distances will not so easily grow when conversing so with God, there more of his brightness, more of his Image upon such a ones face and heart. When gracious persons are ever and anon making such holy stands, and pauses of spirit (being let go too long, and at too large teather, they grow unsavoury) they are kept closer with God. Take two Professors the one careless in this, the other conscientious in attending to it. Alas, what rushes, bruises, and falls upon the very shadow of a temptation? If hee get for kinde of hold of a Promise, this sword of Spirit hangs loose and dangling (as it was like *Amasa's sword*, 2 Sam. 10. 8. yea, the rest of his spiritual Armor, is answerable; yea, but the other keepeth himself that *the evil one toucheth him not*, enters not in temptation: Hee hath Gospel-promises made known, and made over to him to use at any time, hee hath them by him, hee keepeth a holy edge upon them, by which he cutteth asunder many temptations: Hee hath his faith and hope in its strength; his *abides in his strength, and his arms are not broken*, Gen. 48. If temptations to unrighteous or guileful dealings begirt him, his heart crieth out, God forbid; O Lord, how dare I sin against thee! If foiled at any time, he presently cryeth, O Lord, ah my vile heart, O Lord, Lord help: or if unexpected afflictions bee ordered to him, hee hereby tyeth

his shooes of Peace ever and anon closer, Patience (Lord) do mee good hereby; and so is not galled or grieved, as the other when meeting with such stubby and hard wayes. *Paul* was much that way with God, learned contentment in all conditions; knew how to bee full, and how to be hungry, to abound, and to want, and to glory in infirmities.

2 It is a special means to fit us for more 2 To fit us for solemn and continued Prayer. They are solemn Prayer. ever good Proficients in that holy Art of Pleading, they are ever and anon thus plodding upon it; their mindes thus exercised in it upon all occasions. Such as will be ever and anon thus whetting their praying spirits and graces, will make work of it when they come to it. They that are good at these running pulls, and trips, are surely good wrastrlers with God. It is no new or strange work to such to pray, that when they come to pray more solemnly they know not how to set about it; their hearts are not so out of kilter (as we say) as it is with idle Professors: No, these that have been so oft in a day at work with God this way, have not their Tools to seek, but at hand, and all in good plight, fit for use. Praying thoughts and desires are in a holy readines, they familiarize with them.

3 It is a means to meet oft with God. 3 To meet oft with God. If *Abrahams* servant be thus walking with God in his journey, God will bee with him, hee will meet him. No sooner hath he done speaking

speaking to God in his heart, but hee discerneth that God is with him, and accordingly bleseth him, that *being in the way hee led him, &c.* Gen. 24. 12. 27. 45, 47. God is oft with the Minister in his Study, who is thus praying oft in his heart for good speed in his work; oft with the labouring man in the field, whilst at his work, if thus employed spiritually.

Now let us make some brief Use hereof and close this with some Cautions.

*Use.*  
Evils of the neglect hereof, Strangeness to God.

Loss of many holy advantages in the Ordinances.

Let it humble us, that we are so careless and barren in lifting up such Ejaculatory Prayers to the Lord upon every occasion. What strangeness groweth oftentimes betwixt God and our souls, for want of these more transient and occasional talkings with the Lord? How many precious things in private communion of Saints, and edifying discourses are lost for want of some fore-lifts, and present lifting up of our hearts for the presence of God therein, and blessing of God thereupon? How many precious words of grace spoken by God to us will warm and affect us at present hearing of them, yet are lost in respect of the abiding light and life of them, for want of serious and thankful committing of them to the Lord by such short Ejaculatory Prayer, that hee might keep them for us? *Moses* did otherwise when God spake home to him, he *hasteth to bow before him*, and by a short Prayer improveth that particular spoken

*that*



that God was one pardoning iniquity, Exod. 34. 6, 7. Let my Lord pardon our iniquity and our sin, ver. 8, 9. He presently retailleth and putteth to holy use that blessed treasury of Grace delivered of God to him. But wee oftentimes, intending haply to tell God of it more solemnly, in the mean time lose it, for want of present improving of it this way. Yea, many affecting providences, respecting our selves or others, which are unexpectedly ordered, lose their kindly work upon us for want of a present lifting up of our hearts in some suitable, though short ejaculations. How much of God in our particular Callings, how many quickning motions of the Spirit suggested to us therein, are in a manner lost for want of maintaining hereby an holy Discourse with the Lord? yea, how many snares, in want hereof, doe we meet with, and are intangled thereby, even in our lawful Labours and Recreations? In the night season also, how much precious time, and advantage of conversing thus with God, which is even cast and forced upon us, for want of sleep, or the like, yet is all even lost? Whilst we are lifting and revolving our selves too and again in our beds, and yet seldome or never lifting up our hearts thus unto the Lord? And surely, all these things seriously considered, may justly humble us.

A second Use serveth for Exhortation, to stir us all up to make more conscience of

E

this

In providence

In our particular Callings.

In the night season.

Use  
Be we stirred up to it.

No less of time  
hereby.

Many occasi-  
ons of it. As  
intricate passa-  
ges and occur-  
rents.

Unwonted  
judgements.

Variety of Af-  
flictions.

this Duty of Ejaculatory Prayer, those groundless pretences against continued and solemn prayer: Such as expence of too much time, let of other occasions, &c. have here no place. *Boaz* his harvest men may work hard, and yet lift up their hearts for a blessing upon *Boaz*, and the like, *Ruth* 2. 4. *Nehemiah* amidst his weighty employments may be often at this holy work, *Lord, remember me concerning this, &c.* chap. 13. 13, 14, 21, 22. *Isaiah* amidst his Ministerial exercises may make such holy Apostrophes, in way of appeal to the Lord, or the like, as *Isa.* 53. 1. *Lord, who hath beleev'd our report?* So may *Ezekiel*, chap. 20. 49. *Ah, Lord God, they say, Doth hee not speak Parables?* Yea, do not they, as well as others in their way meet with such intricacies, as by way of holy Apostrophes they must say, as *Zachary* to Christ, that Angel, *What mean these?* *Zach.* 7. 4. Do not they then, with *Amos* in his work, hear of, or behold more unwonted, unexpected judgements approaching, and had need make such holy Apostrophes, as *Amos* did on like occasion? *Amos* 7. 1, 2, 4. 5. *O Lord God forgive, arise we beseech thee, by whom shall Jacob arise, for hee is small?* or as the sudden stroak of God upon *Peliah*, whilst *Ezekiel* was prophecying, turneth his speech to the Lord, *Ah, Lord, God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel!* *Ezek.* 11. 13. Yea, will not variety of Afflictions, some outward, some inward,

ward, which once in every four and twenty hours are wont to befall us, put us upon it to cry as sometime the Church did in hers, *Behold, O Lord, see and consider*, Lamentations 1. 9, 11, 20. As Jesus Christ did in his, when inwardly loaded, as well as outwardly afflicted, *Matthew 26. 47. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken mee?* And whither also will our spirits wander betwixt our solemn praying in the Morning, and that at Evening, if wee doe not now and then, each day try whether our hearts bee gone out of call after vaine objects? will they not else be too fast wedged in worldly affairs, unless now and then hereby loosened a little? But for the fastning of this exhortation, and the right managing of the duty exhorted unto, let us lay down, 1. Some motives to it. 2. Some *Motives.* helps and means for it. 3. Some cautions about it. Touching the Motives consider,

1 That this Precept and Duty injoynd of God, is a very precious priviledge to the Saints, they of all others may well bee forward to this Duty; in that it is well for them that ejaculatory prayer is acceptable prayer, a choyce service which the Lord himself appointeth and delighteth in: it is well for us, brethren and sisters, that we may thus speak and converse with our God, when none either thinketh or knoweth of it; wee may ever and anon talk thus with our heavenly and gracious Sovereigne and  
1. It is well for the Saints, that God requireth and owneth this duty.  
others

others in our very company, neither hear, nor mark it; as *Nehemiah* did in the Kings presence, he prayed to the Lord of heaven, and the King not privie to it, *Nehemiah* 2. 4. As we walk in the way with others, wee may exchange a few of these holy speeches, and yet keep our way and discourse with them; little doe Carnal persons think how many of these holy lifts sometimes gracious and spiritual persons ( occasionally cast into their company ) have, whilst they are with them. It is meat and drink which they know not of, communing with one that is invisible. They may have sweet answers and returns also thereof, which fill their hearts with heavenly joy, wherewith a stranger doth not intermeddle. Yea, in their sleep, the Saints may thus bee talking with God, *1 King*. 3. 9. it was in a Dreame when God said unto *Salomon*, *Ask what I shall give thee*, verse 5. and hee did so, verse 15. and awakened, and behold it was a dream; a sign then, that hee was that while as in a sleep, when praying, and yet so graciously accepted, and answered, ver. 10, 11. And alas, what else would have become of Gods *Asahs*, and *Iehoshaphats*, *Dauids*, &c. of whom you heard, if this were not prevailing prayer? what should desolate *Jonah* in the Whales belly also doe? *Jonah* 2. 1. Hee prayed but in this sort. What shall poor *Jeremiah* in the Dungeon doe? but hereby you see hee doth well enough, *Lam.* 3. 55, 56. *I called*

upon

*upon the name of the Lord out of the low Dungeon, and thou heardest my voyce, &c.* Some Friends would sometimes give a world to exchange a word or two with a choyse friend of theirs in their extremity: If I could but send or speak with such a one, will such say, I need not, I should not lye here thus. If my Father, if my Brother did but know of it, I am sure they would relieve mee in my straits: though I am now a *Turks* slave, yet I have such and such friends in such a Country which would Ransome me, &c. Yea, but the Saints need not say so, the Saints are never so hard put to it, but if they want opportunity more solemnly, yet this way they may be telling their heavenly Father, and friend Jesus Christ, how it is with them. And is not this well for them? yea verily. Alas, what should dumb ones doe, whose tongues the enemy cut out, or if not, gag them, if yet there were no means left of speaking with their heavenly Father? but blessed be God there is this way left to such. It may bee malicious persecutors will bethrowing the Saints into a Jayl, amongst a company of Rogues, which will scoffe at the very mention of prayer; now welfare this part of Gods revealed Will, injoyning ejaculations for prayers also: the poore Saints may then pour out these prayers to their God, in which such a hellish crue cannot well interrupt them; they may hear them sigh, it may be, or see them weep, but



judge that as arising from other causes, which indeed and in truth is some sigh of love, holy longing, admiration, or the like; a precious melting of faith in their hearts, amidst these short heart-speeches with the Lord. Sometimes the Saints are like *Hezekiah*, as well oppressed inwardly as outwardly, that they cannot in a continued way pray, but only in an abrupt and broken way, chatter, and that within themselves, and at length get out, *Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me*: and they are like Babes in Christ, and can but brokenly stammer out their mindes to the Lord, or like the Publican, not daring in a manner to speak much; but in short, to bespeak Mercy as to chief of Sinners: is it then not well for such, that, *O Lord bee merciful to me a sinner*, is such an acceptable prayer with God? yea verily, it is well for the Saints when to leave the world, when neither they can speak to be understood of any friend, nor their friends to them, albeit both may desire it with their mindes and spirits, and have audience and acceptance: and indeed if this were not so acceptable a duty, many a blessed soul-soliloqui with God of the Saints living and dying, were made null and useless. And is it not well then for the Saints that ejaculatory prayer is acceptable prayer? yea, it is very well in these and other respects: and truly, thought it bee as I may say, ill for some notorious enemies

enemies of God, yet this is so : for the Saints can soon do their errand, and in a very few words too. As *David* did *Achitophels*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. It is well also for many a man who is yet in his sins, or at least under Captivity to some distemper, that ejaculatory prayer of the Saints is of such a nature; they at *Taberah* had been consumed else, when once the Fire of God was kindled amongst them; if *Moses* his ejaculatory cry had not been a prayer of the right stamp, and full weight, to pass for current with the Lord, *Numb.* 11. 12. *Moses* cried to the Lord, and the fire was quenched; sundry think *Paul* fared the better for *Stephens* ejaculatory prayer at his Death, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. And assuredly many of the blinded Jews, who ignorantly Crucified the Lord of Glory, fared the better for the ejaculatory prayer of Christ, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, *Luk.* 23. 34. witness the conversion of thousands of those, who had a hand in Crucifying the Lord Jesus, *Acts* 2. 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41. verses compared. Other Saints likewise fare the better for this, that the ejaculatory prayers of others of their brethren for them, are acceptable prayers to God; *Onesiphorus* will fare the better for the short prayer of *Paul*, at the very day of Judgement, 2 *Tim.* 1. 18. *The Lord grant that he may find mercy at that day.* How well then is it in all respects, that God will have

Second Motive, It is that upon which the Spirit putteth us often.

Third motive, it is that which the choicest Saints prize much.

his Saints praying continually with ejaculatory prayer also?

2 In that it is a service which the Lord by special motion of his Spirit put his Saints upon oft times, as well as by general command requireth the same: *Let me hear thy voyce*, saith Christ to his people, *Cantic. 2. 14.* To which the Church answereth in an ejaculatory prayer, *verse 17. Turn, my beloved, and bee thou like a Roe*: So *Cantic. 8. 13.* The Lord putteth them upon speaking to him, *Let me hear thy voyce*: to which they return an ejaculation, *vers. 14. Make hast my beloved*: now it will not bee safe to neglect any such motions made by the Lord, and by his Spirit, lest being grieved, he with-draw from us.

3 In that the most Spiritual persons have been, and are thus exercised in those holy ejaculations, as was Christ, as *Luke 3. 21. When he was baptized, he so prayed*: when those Disciples returned with that success, *bee lifts up his heart, Luke 20. 21. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* So *John 12. 27, 28. Father, glorifie thy name.* And so *Luke 23. 31. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doe.* So *Matthew 26. 46. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* So *Luke 23. 46. When to leave the world, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.* Thus *David*, and *Nehemiah*, and *Moses*, and others, who were most Spiritual, how oft were they thus praying?

4 In that Ejaculatory prayer hath prevailed with God for great things; persons have been healed of plagues. As upon such a prayer of *Hezekiah*, *2 Chron. 30. 18, 19, 20.* verses, *God hearkned, and healed the people.* Wonders have been done by it; as when upon such a Prayer of *Isaiah*, the Sun goeth backward, *2 Kings 20. 11.* *Isaiah cried unto the Lord, and the Sun went back ten degrees.* Such wonders were done hereby at the red Sea, *Nehem. 9. 9.* as formerly was shewed.

Fourth Motive,  
its very prevailing with God.

Now in the second place consider of some Helps to help us this way.

Helps to pray  
thus.

1 Get, and maintain a spiritual frame of heart, walk much with God in Meditation, and the like; and frequent occasion will bee offered of such like talking with him. A heavenly heart will bee often lifted thus heaven-ward. When *Simeon* was in such a frame, then *Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*, *Luke 2. 29.* So when *John* is in a like frame, then, *Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly*, *Rev. 22. 20.* One Ejaculation or other ariseth out of the heart in such a frame; and as a branch thereof, get our hearts weaned from the things of the world; be as one leaving the world, and then an old *Jacob* will be mounting thus, *Gen. 49. 18.* *Lord, I have waited for thy Salvation.* *David*, who as a weaned childe, was much in holy Ejaculations; so was *Dauids Lord*, who was so much above the world, & such have

1 Heavenly  
mindedness.

have most to do in Heaven, and therefore so oft moving that way.

2 Get a humble soft heart, sensible of sin and self-emptiness. Broken hearts will be often breathing out Ejaculatory sighs and requests; The humbled Thief upon the Cross, and Publican in the Temple, had their Ejaculations.

3 Sense of Gods love.

3 Keep in life and light, as much as may be, the sense of the love of God in Christ. When the Church is in Christs arms, and in his bosome, then shee hath her Ejaculatory request, *Set me as a seal upon thy arm, &c. Cant. 8. 5, 6.* This stirreth up holy love in us to God, and that will be making ever and anon abrupt expressions of its desire to him.

Cautions.

1 That it be not too seldom

Touching the third thing, consider of these Cautions.

1 Content not our selves, that more rarely we have some one list this way, but be ever and anon sending up some short requests unto the Lord: Four times in one Chapter is *Nehemiah* doing thus upon several occasions.

2 That it be not only in a Petitionary way.

2 Look that we do it not in a Petitionary way onely, but praising way as well. So *David*, Psalm. 8. 3 4 5. *When I see thy Heavens, &c. I said, What is man that thou art thus mindful of him!* So *Iesus Christ*, *I thank thee Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes*, Luke



10.21. and *Joh. 11.41* 42. *Father, I thank thee, that thou alwayes hearest me.*

3 Look that it be not a bare formal cry, for fashions sake, a customary Lord have mercy upon mee, or Lord bleſs mee, or the like, in a morning, or at going to bed, reſting therein, as if now ſome goodly ſervice were done, or that ſufficeth; or a more forced outcry to God, occaſioned from ſudden terrors or diſtruſts, and the like; or an hypocritical ſemblance of a heart liſt to heaven, by an affected liſting up the eyes when in others company, or in a ſeemed ſqueezing out a hollow hearted ſigh, inſtead of ſuch cordial Ejaculations, to which we have been all this while exhorting.

3 That it be not in an affected way.

Laſtly, Look that none under this pretence, lay aſide the due and conſtant exerciſe of publick or private Prayer in a more continued way. Let not one duty juſtle out another: Continued Prayer in ſolemn manner is our duty, as well as Ejaculatory Prayer, as God willing wee ſhall ſee in the following part of this Diſcourſe; wee are the rather to make conſcience of Ejaculatory Prayer, that we may be fit for ſolemn Prayer: And we are ſo to pray in a continued Prayer, as it may leave us, ſending up our after Ejaculations unto heaven.

4 That it thruſt not out Solemn prayer.

## CHAP. III.

*Touching more solemn and continued  
Prayer; And particularly of  
Publick Prayer.*

**V**VE have spoken of Ejaculatory Prayer; proceed we now to consider of Solemn and continued Prayer, which is either Publick, or Church-prayer, Private or Family-prayer, Secret, or Closet-prayer.

Begin we now with the consideration of Publick or Church-prayer, which is also included in this indefinite Precept, written to the Church of the *Thessalonians*, collectively as well as distributively considered, *1 Thes. 1.1.* Whence also in this Chapter hee exhorteth them to due esteem of their Officers, *vers. 12.* and *vers. 30.* of the Ordinance of the Ministerial dispensation of the word. So then, Publick or Church-prayer is a duty also which we ought conscionably to attend in the season thereof, *1 Tim. 2.1, 2, 3.* *Paul* exhorts that in the first place, *Prayers be made for all sorts of men*; namely, Publick Prayers, and maketh the same very good and acceptable in the sight of God. It is emblematically set forth under the notion of *four living Creatures*, and *four and twenty Elders met in way of worship of God*, *Rev. 4. 8. & 5. 8, 10.*

*Ag. 16. 13.*

For

For our better proceeding herein, consider, 1. Of the Requisites to Publick-praier. 2. Of the Reasons of it. 3. Of some Use of it.

Touching the first, Some things are required to such as are to bee the mouth of the Church in prayer, some things in such as joyn with them,

Things required of such as are to pour out publick praier.

Of the former sort of Requisites are,

1 A Publick Call.

1 A publick Call. So it was of old, *Deut. 21.5. The Priests the sons of Levi shall come neer, for them hath the Lord thy God chosen to minister to him, and to bless in the Name of the Lord; which was in Prayer-wise, as Num. 6. 23, 24, &c. On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious to thee, &c.*

Now this Call to become the peoples mouth to God, as it respecteth God, so it is (amongst other things) Gods fitting them with abilities, as for Preaching, so for Prayer; and his sequestering them accordingly thereunto, as to their work: Whence that *Acts 6.4. Wee will give our selves to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word*: namely, as we are Ministers, and in an Authoritative way, both alike are Ministerial acts, and gifting for the one, as well as for the other, is a choice part of a Ministerial Call. That which wee render [*Consecrate*] *Aaron and his sons*; namely for their work, *Exod. 29.9. It is ומרת יד אהרן ויד בניו* So *Lev.*

*Lev. 8. v. 22.* The Ram of Consecration of the Levites, is in Hebrew, אֵיל הַמִּלִּחִים *a il ha milichim*, *The Ram of Fulness*, or as it is in the Hebrew, *Fulnesses*.

As if such men by their Calling, were very full, men of all Abilities, for their Ministerial works; yea, as if it were one maine part of their Call, to bee that way as compleat as may bee. Hence also the Anointing of the Priests, *Exod. 28. 41.* In taking of the holy unction of the Spirit, and the gifts thereof in them, *Joshuah* the Priest must have, as the garments of Righteousness, and Holiness through Christ with other Saints, *Zach. 3. 4.* so a fair Mitre upon his head, v. 5. as one honoured above all others, in a manner, for his head Ornaments, and Abilities in his Ministry. The Elders in the Apostles dayes called to that Office, they were gifted upon any occasion to make an in-wrought Prayer, *James 5. 14.* *Let them send for the Elders, and let them pray over him,* and vers. 16. *ἀνέστις ἐν ἐργασίᾳ*, the in-wrought Prayer of a Righteous man availeth much, Both the Officers, yea, and Members also of pure Churches, in the dayes of the Gospel (as those four living Creatures, and twenty four Elders, graver Christians) are represented as gifted for Prayer. --- *Having Vials filled with odours of Prayers*, *Rev. 5. 8.* And surely, such as are to bee the chosen constant Speakers of the Assembly to the Lord, they had need have choice skill in all holy

of holy and heavenly Praying-oratory; such as  
are to be the chosen Champions (as I may  
say) of the Congregation, to wrestle it out  
with God on their behalf, they had need have  
the art of holy wrestling, or prayer. Such as  
are the chosen Solicitors for this or that Cor-  
poration, as they had need to be acquainted  
with the people well, that they may be able  
to make every ones prayer, and plea, and  
complaint, and the like; So had they need to  
have the choice skill, and holy art of pleading  
with the Lord, as cause shall require.

This call of such as are to be the Officers,  
and more constant mouth of the Congre-  
gation in Prayer, consists in their free E-  
lection, and full Approbation, for that  
and other Ministerial worke, some way  
manifested and expressed by the people,  
together with their own free consent there-  
unto. Thus the Levite set apart of God  
to the Ministry of old, and amongst other  
things therein, to bless in the Name of the  
Lord; or to pray, and praise God, pub-  
lickly, *Deut. 10. 8.* The Elders of the Con-  
gregation, on the Congregations behalfe,  
are to impose hands upon them, *Num. 8.*  
*9, 10.* in testimony of their solempne call of  
them to Ministerial work. God will have  
no one to bee the mouth of any Church,  
who shall be a burthen, or grievous to it;  
he will have none forced upon it, but rather  
have such a mouth, as the body shall desire  
gladly thereby to breathe out its requests,  
and



and desires to the Lord. Nor was the Lord more tender of old of the orderly administration of his publick worship, than he is now; then the peoples call was Gods call, he set the Levites apart to bless in his name in their setting them apart for that end. And so it is now, publick prayer is the publick act of the Church, there should then be a publick hand in it, not onely in joynt consent to the petitions, but by solempne call of him, which preferreth the same in their names to the Court of Heaven. It is of great concernment to every one in the Church, as what words, and how, so by whom the same are spoken in the Lords ears, as their words. They who draw so near to the Lord to deal in Christs name for so many others had need be approved of God for that end, and that they are not, if not approved of his people. In a word, it is no small encouragement to such so called, against all inward and outward discouragements, and temptations, which they meet with in their work; that as they are in Gods way, so in the place, and about the work in special, to which the Lord by his people did call them.

1<sup>d</sup> Requ.  
2 Praying in  
the spirit.

A second Requisite to him who is to pray as the mouth of the Assembly, is, that he *pray in the Spirit*, Eph. 6. 18. *Praying with all manner of prayer* (and so with publick prayer also) *in the Spirit*; not alone with our hearts or spirits, but *praying in the Holy Ghost*, Jude 20. Or by a gift, and by  
the

the immediate helpe of the Holy Ghost. Even such as are to edifie others in their most holy faith, privately, are to pray thus; and much more such as are by Office to give themselves to the Ministry of the Word. There is great danger (to say no worse of it) when this Tabernacle, Temple, Church-incense, or Prayer, is of humane composition, *Exod. 30.38*. And in offering of so publick a Sacrifice with fire of mans kindling, and such as commeth not downe from heaven, *Levit. 10.1,2*. but much indeed needeth not to bee spoken to this, now that the Lord by his grace, hath so cleared up his minde to his servants of all sorts in these dayes. Yet let mee briefly confirm this truth, and thereby the hearts also of the Saints in the present truth: Publick Prayer must bee in the Spirit, or by an immediate gift and help of the Holy Ghost.

I Because Publick prayer being part of Publick worship, it should bee performed with greatest beauty, *Psal. 29.2*. and *96.8*. It is twice repeated, *Worship the Lord in the beauties of Holiness* (for manner, as well as place, the Temple of old.) Now the Church in her beauty, *Cantic. 7.1*. compared with vers. 9. *The roose of her mouth* (both in Prayer and Preaching) *is like the best wine, that goeth downe sweetly, causing the lips of these which are asleep to speak*. And surely experience teacheth it, that there is

*Reasons.*  
It must be carryed on with most holy beauty.

F

more

more lively efficacy to such as are present when prayers are put up to the Lord in the assembly, from the immediate help of the Spirit, then any other way.

2 God is most honoured by it.

2 Because by such manner of prayer God hath most Glory ( which is that, which in publick worship is mainly intended, *Psal.* 29. 2. ) for he hath most glory of the precious gifts of the spirit, inabling Ministers to pray thus : of his glorious wisdom also, in the variety of the measures thereof bestowed upon his servants. Those Church-Officers which have their vials full of such odours, which as those of old, were only of Divine invention, composition, and direction, they in special sort have *their Harps sounding forth the praises of God*, ( *Revel.* 5. 8. ) These ministerial stars in the Firmament of the Church, ( *Revel.* 1. 20. ) do then in special wise declare the Glory of God, when they shine, as in preaching, so in prayer publicly, not with borrowed light from others, but by an innate and natural light, ( as I may say ) in them, considered as spiritual, and spiritually gifted of the Spirit.

3 It is the Churches perfection.

3 Because such manner of praying in the Spirit, consisteth best with the Churches perfection. The lips of such a Spouse or Church of Christ which is most fair and compleat, they drop ( both in publick prayer and preaching ) *as the Honey-comb*, *Cantic.* 4, 10, 11. There is an immediate

mediate inward principle, there is an holy store of sweet and savoury graces of the spirit within, such as are the Churches mouth, when without stint, restraint, or constraint, they do freely drop out wholesome expressions, sweet to the taste of the Lord Jesus. When the Church in the 45th *Psalm* is (under the notion of *Salomons Egyptian Wife*, a Gentile) set forth in her glorious ornaments, verse 14. *Shee is said to be brought to the King* (Jesus Christ) *in garments of needlework*. The Churches garments, as they are the glorious robes of the righteousness of Faith, and graces of the Spirit, (which are visible to the Lord, though more invisible to men) so are they the ordinances too, wherewith shee is (as it were) invested, when she cometh near the Lord in the Assembly: now such Church ornaments as preaching and prayer in special, they are needle-work, wrought on both sides, (as I may say) the inward work of the Spirit, respecting the gifts and graces therein exercised. The outward work thereof, the very expressions, not wrought by men to our hands, so much as by the Spirit, framing and directing the same in publick as well as private prayer, as before was hinted from the Greek phrase in *1am. 5. 16.* in singing of *Psalms*; wherein not one alone as in preaching and prayer, acteth in the name of God, or others, but every one instructeth each other personally. It sufficeth that

for the matter, it be the word of Christ the Prophet of his Church, speaking the same, *Col. 3. 16.* and for the manner of expression, such as by the help of a gift of the Spirit, is expressed outwardly, in the words of the Spirit (as near as may bee) and uttered from suitable workings of the Spirit in the hearts of all inwardly.

4 Its most suitable to the Churches liberty.

4 Because such a way of carrying on Publick prayer, is most suitable to the Churches liberty, and to the spiritual liberty also of the Officers of the Church, as part thereof. The Church is now no bond-woman, but a free-woman, and so are her children sharers with her in that freedome (*Gal. 4. 26. 31.*) as from ceremonial injunctions, which sometimes God ordained, so much more from humane inventions, which the Lord never instituted. The Churches Ministerial mouthes, have most bold liberty of Spirit in such conceived prayer, to receive such drops of the Spirit of prayer poured out upon the Saints, and the renewed influences thereof. Yea to improve the holy variety of seasonable motions, even then made by the Spirit interceding in them; wherein some particular cases of sundry poor souls present, haply unknown to the Minister, are to the life represented, even as if the parties had informed them thereof. Yea they are more free to improve the various measures of their gift of Prayer received, which in divers Ministers are very various



various ; yea they are freer to express the various statures (as it were) or pitch of their respective Churches, being not all of one size, but some more eminent for grace than others. Yea they are freer to express the various conditions and failings of their Churches, which as the Moon, are subject to various aspects. { *Cant. 6. 10.* } The Churches, and her Ministers liberty, is in both alike preserved entire, when they are left to the free use of all holy liberty, to utter the minde, and case of the Church to the Lord, as when left to like liberty, to speak and deliver the Lords minde to the Church.

5 Because that way of Prayer is most suitable to the nature of acceptable and prevailing Prayer; as is in-wrought prayer, as before shewed from *Jam. 5. 16.* That Prayer which is the very Suppliants owne meditation by the help of the Spirit (*Psal. 5. 1.*) *Give eare to [my words] Consider [my meditation]* That Prayer which is the pouring out of the very Suppliants hearts or soules, *1 Sam. 1. 15. I have poured out my soule to the Lord;* that is, made each ones prayer. So *Psal. 62. 8. Pour out your hearts to him, or pray.* That which is a serving of God with the Suppliants spirit. *Rem. 1. 9. My God whom I serve with my spirit.*

5 Its most acceptable to the Lord.

6 Because such Prayer is most costly to him who is the Churches mouth, and so

6 Its most costly.

a Sacrifice most suitable to a Saints own desire, and best accepted of the Lord : such an one will say as *David* in another case (*2 Sam. 24*) *I will not offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing* ; the Tabernacle and Temple-Incense ( resembling also Church Prayer ) as in the matter costly, so in the manner, it cost much pounding and beating, *Exod. 30. 36.* the *Mincab* for the Congregation, as well as that for any particular person, was to be of fine flower, *Lev. 2. 8.* Church Prayer also resembled thereby, would cost the Officers thereof much sifting. The lips of that Spouse or Church of Christ, which is so fair, *Cant. 4. 7.* they are ( *vers. 3.* ) like a *thred of Scarlet fine spun, and twice dyed, in the wool, and in the thred* ; very costly, whether speaking in Prayer or Preaching.

7 It is suitable  
to the gifts of  
called Officers.

7 Because such as are the called, officed mouthes of the Church, they are ( as hath been shewed ) gifted for publick prayer in their names, as well as preaching ( as Gods mouth ) to them ; wherefore they ought upon all occasions to be exercising that one Talent, as well as the other. True it is, that some of these Stars differ from other in the glory of their light and brightness ; but yet every of the Stars in Christs hand, shine from an inward light in such publick worship of God : Each ones Vial is not of the same capacity ; yet each Church-Officers vial and vessel hath its proportionable fulness of such holy odors of prayer, *Rev. 1. 20. & 5. 8.*

8 Because

8 Because this way of prayer, as it hath 8 It is least of-  
clearest warrant from the Word, as before sensitive to the  
proved, so is of least scandal to the choycest Saints.  
of the Saints, as experience of former and  
latter times abundantly witnesseth.

A third Requisite unto such as are the 3 Requisite.  
mouth of the Assembly in prayer, is holy Holy wisdom.  
wisdom, and diligence, in observing, as  
their own souls special occasions, so those of  
the Congregation. Those four living Crea-  
tures resembling Church-Officers, *Kevel. 4.*  
*6, 8.* they are full of eyes, for that end, to  
look through both themselves and others,  
as they are publicly to Worship the  
Lord.

A fourth Requisite is sympathizing af- 4 Sympathy.  
fection with the people in their cases, as if  
their own. So the people of old, *Heb. 5. 1.*  
Other Requisites might be mentioned, but  
I forbear.

Requisites of the second sort in such as  
joyn in publick prayer, are Requisites in  
the people,

1 Assent of faith, with oneness of mind 1. Assent of  
and heart, suitable thoughts and affections. faith.

All the precious strings of the gracious  
minds and hearts of such as are present,  
should be tuneable (as it were) and sympho-  
nize in this Lesson of their chief Musician,  
*Mat. 18. 19.* if they agree in one, or sympho-  
nize (as the Greek phrase is.) Those holy  
Suppliants, in *Acts 2. 14.* They continued  
with one accord in prayer. Hence that re-  
founding of a redoubled Amen at the pub-  
lick

lick Blessing, *Nehem. 8. 6.* Hence such care had, that Publick prayer may bee expressed in a Language understood by all, that the people may annex their *Amen* thereunto, *1 Cor. 14. 16.*

Attention

2 A gracious and serious attention and intention of spirit thereon. God putteth such of his officed solicitors upon the mention of the several cases of his people present, and every one had need attend the calling out, and handling (as it were) of his case, not neglecting others. Each ones spirit hath need to write (as I may say) his name to such a Corporation-Petition, and be ready in heart to say, Lord, This indeed is the desire of my soul, this is my very grievance and burden, Lord, &c. If poor souls who haply have lien spiritually wind-bound meet with any holy gale of the Spirit therein, they had need be ready to hoise their sail, to catch it and improve it.

3 Amity.

3 Amity and sweetness of spirit and of affection, both towards him which prayeth in their steads, and them which joyn with them therein in Publick prayer, all, and every one must *lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*, *1 Tim. 2. 8.* for then all are as one in their joynt desires, and are as persons put in each others steads and cases, expecting the love and forgiveness of God for each other, and had need be in such a frame, as to yeeld love and forgiveness each to other, *Matth. 6. 12. Forgive us*

our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

4 Holiness and heavenliness of heart. 4 Holiness.  
Publick prayer must have pure hearts as well as hands, 1 Tim. 2. 8. and James 4. 8. the Vials from which both Officers and Members of the Congregation offer up such odours, must be golden Vials, Revel. 5. 8.

5 Faith: 1 Tim. 2. 8. Hands lifted up 5 Faith.  
(in Publick prayer) without doubting: Every one should put to his Amen of Faith, as well as of assent or desire.

Lastly, Reverence. Hence in that representation of Publick Church Worship, all fall down and worship, Rev. 4. 9, 10. Psal. 95. 6. O come let us worship and bow down, and let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. 6 Reverence.

What gesture is most meet in Publick prayer? Quest.

Such a gesture as may best express much holy reverence, as kneeling or standing up, not sitting. And that for these Reasons: Answ.  
Touching the gesture.

1 In that in Publick prayer, there is a more solemn presence of God, and of his holy Angels. Wee are in special wise before the Lord our Maker, and regard is to be had to our carriage in Prayer, because of the Angels, 1 Cor. 11. 4. 10. compared. The very Angels cover their faces when the Lord is in his Temple, as on his Throne, Isa. 6. 1, 2, 3. much more cause have we, who in Publick prayer do all come a begging, to come



come with a publick Petition to our glorious King, to offer it up to him upon obended knees, to bee very reverend in our gesture.

2.

2 In that God giveth it in most special charge in publick Worship of prayer, that we be very reverent; for that charge of each other, recorded *Psa. 95. 6. Let us bow down and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, respects not any other part of Worship so proper as publick prayer, as is evident: and that mutual charge of Gods people, each of other, but the eccho and result of Gods charge, first given to them so to do. If *Daniel* in secret prayer will be kneeling, much more should we in publick prayer, *Dan. 6. 10. He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, &c.*

3.

3 In that the examples of the Saints exercised in publick prayer, is either standing *2 Chro. 20. 3. 6. And Jehoshaphat stood in the Congregation, and said, O Lord, &c.* or (most commonly) kneeling, *1 King. 8. 54. The King rose up from kneeling on his knees, Acts 20. 36. Paul kneeled down and prayed; and so chap. 2. He kneeled down and prayed; and in secret prayer it was his constant gesture: Hence putting bowing of his knees for prayer, For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father &c.* that is, I pray; and less reverence should not be expressed in publick prayer.

4.

4 In that in publick prayer wee should all edifie one another by our reverence in gesture, as being too apt naturally to come to monnes

monness and flightness therein. Hence Gods people are presented as calling one upon another, *to bow down and kneel before the Lord their Maker*, Psal. 95. 6.

5 In that all care should bee had by the Saints, that they give no occasion of stumbling to others, who savingly know not the Lord Jesus Christ. Our unreverent gestures before them, will harden them in their careless, yea, haply affected, unreverent gestures and carriages.

*David sate before the Lord*, 2 Sam. 18.

That was private prayer of himself alone, none else (that we read of) joyning with him therein; and in sundry cases more liberty may be used in our gestures in private then in publick prayer.

Object.

Answ. I.

2 The Hebrew word is oft used for staying and abiding; and so it may seeme here to hold forth rather the time of his continuance in prayer, then his gesture. Of the use of the word *שׁוּב*, sen *Gen.* 22. 5. and 24. 55. and 27. 44. and 38. 11. and 29. 14. *Exod.* 24. 14. *Levit.* 14. 8. *Numb.* 20. 1. and. 22. 19. 1 *Sam.* 20. 19. and 2 *Sam.* 10. 5. and 11. 12. 1 *King.* 15. 16. and 2 *King.* 22. 46. and 14. 10. *Judges* 6. 18, *Psalms* 101. 7. and elsewhere.

3 It is not probable that he who professeth (*Psalms* 109. 24.) that his knees were weak through fasting, or praying on Fast days, that he did now sit in prayer. At the best then, this instance of *Dauids* sitting, is but

5.

2.

3.

but a may be, and no other instance, that we know of, of the like in Scripture; but both the rules and examples of the other gestures, are clearly set down in Scripture; therefore these are most safe and futable gestures, in the ordinary course in Publick prayer; extraordinary cases of bodily infirmities (wherein in mercy pleaseth God, rather than the strictness of this or that gesture in sacrificing or praying) not varying or nullifying the ordinary Rule.

Reasons for publick prayer.

Reas. 1.

Publick Ordinances sanctified by it.

Come wee now to the Reasons inforcing this duty of Publick prayer.

Publick Ordinances being sanctified also (as are other things) by prayer, *1 Tim. 4. 4. Call for Publick prayer.* Wherefore Gods House of Publick worship, is called an *House of Prayer*, as if that were one most choicest part thereof, *Isaiah 56. 7. Acts 2. 42. They continued as in the Apostles Doctrine* (attending upon preaching) *and breaking of Bread* (partaking of the Lords Supper) *and in prayer*, sanctifying the rest.

Reas. 2.

Publick occasions call to it.

Because publick occasions call to it *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.* The cases of Publick persons in Commonwealths, of Churches, &c. call thereto. Publick wants call for publick Petitions; Publick sins for publick confessions. The plaister must bee as large as the sore, the Land must repent. *Jer. 18. 7.* so every Congregation, in it must down on their knees to ask the Lord forgiveness. Members of Congregations must sometimes give them-

at themselves to Church fasting and prayer, as  
 well as Family or Closet fasting and prayer,  
 1 Cor. 7. 5.

Because gracious persons are of a publick  
 spirit. *God be merciful to us*, was the Church  
 prayer of old, *Psal. 67. 1, 2.* wherein?  
*Make thy way known to all Nations*, *Cant. 8. 8.*  
 The Church moveth Christ to do some-  
 thing for her sister Church, being ready, for  
 her part, for them otherwise; *What shall wee*  
*do for our sister? &c.* Christ teacheth all to  
 pray plurally; *Give us this day, forgive us*  
*our trespasses, and lead us not into tempta-*  
*tion, &c.* As holy Priests in Christ, *Rev. 1.*  
*5, 6.* they offer up severally and joyntly Sa-  
 crifices of Prayer and Prayles respecting  
 others, the publick good. *By the blessing of*  
*the upright* (or the prayer of the upright,  
 pleading and prevailing for a blessing that  
 way) *the City is exalted*, *Prov. 11. 11.* Now  
 in publick prayer, there is a holy confluence  
 of the breathings of such publick spirits; and  
 the Lord in Wisdome, Faithfulness, and  
 Mercy to all sorts, will have this for a stated  
 Ordinance, that such gracious dispositions  
 in his own, may bee exercised and exer-  
 ted.

Reas. 3.

Gracious per-  
 sons are of  
 publick spirits

4 Because publick prayer is a publick  
 profession and confession of God, of the  
 onely true God, and that one Mediatour  
 Jetus Christ; yea of the oneness of the  
 Saints with each other in the same Father  
 and Saviour. When the Apostle, *Rom. 10.*  
 10. had

Reas. 4.

4 A publick  
 profession and  
 confession of  
 God

10. had spoken of confession to the Lord with the month, vers. 12, 13. hee instanceth, in calling upon God as one special branch of it.

Nor is it the least honour to the Lord, as a great King, to have so many several companies of Subjects waiting on him with petitions for his Royal favour: it is an holy joynt homage and service, for many to joyn as one man in prayer. Calling upon the name of the Lord, & serving him with one shoulder, are joyned, *Zeph. 3. 9.* Publick prayer is a publick profession and expression of one and the same faith, of many in one and the same Father, in one and the same Mediator of the Covenant, and in one and the same Covenant of Grace; it is a joynt cry of one and the same spirit, in and from many childrens hearts, calling one *Abba Father*; it is a common meeting of the several desires of several good hearts in this one common center. It is a holy burning-glass, wherein the several bright and warm rayes of the faith of many suppliants being in an holy wise contracted in one point (as it were) breaketh forth into a holy fire of love-expressions to the Lord, and their own and others souls welfare; it is a joynt outcry by reason of a serious sense of the same grievances of many: if others sorrows, sufferings, wants, burthens, be not the same with thine or mine; yet in praying thus, wee make each ones ayls ours, as they do make ours



ours theirs. We come to pray in publick with variety of cases, differing from each other in sundry respects: but in publick prayer each ones soul is put ( as it were ) in anothers stead : publick prayer is a publick Hue and Cry made out by the joynt consent of this or that imbodyed people, against some common enemies of their souls, and dangerous enemies to their blessed King, his Crown, and his Dignity. Publick prayer, it is a publick condemnation, therefore voyced by our own mouthes against any private discords and divisions, if any such should be amongst us.

5 Because publick prayer is in a special sort delightful to the Lord, he putteth his people in special wise upon it, *Psal. 81. 10. Open thy mouth wide ( in prayer ) and I will fill it* : hee is therefore troubled, if publick prayer as well as private bee neglected, *Isa. 43. 22. Thou hast not called upon mee, O Jacob*. Jesus Christ is very ready to present and perfume Publick, as well as more private Prayers of his Saints, *Revel. 8. 3*. The Lord is ready to reward it in his people. *Let all the people, or Gentiles praise thee*, was the Churches prayer, *Psal. 67. 5. and verse 6. Then shall God, even our God, bless us* : they praying for a blessing upon others, triumph for a blessing as upon others, so upon themselves. It is good and acceptable to him that publick prayer bee made for all Saints, *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2, 3*. Christ took it kindly, that the

*Reason 5.*

5 It is very delightful to the Lord.

the multitude opened their mouths to beseech mercy for one that had an imperfection in his speech, and beseech him to lay his hands upon him, Mark. 7. 32. Upon which hee cured him, vers. 33, 34, 35.

*Reason 6.*

6 Its a fruit of Christs death, and represents his publick spirit.

6 Such manner of approaches of Assemblies to the Lord, are a fruit of Christs purchase; that way to Gods Throne, is made by the rending of the vail of Christs flesh. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 22, 25. compared; it represents the very Spirit of Christ, which is all for the publick good of his people. There are in publick prayer the special influence of the Spirit, which were scattered in many, compacted and gathered as it were in one; the waters of various graces running in several gracious hearts, as in sundry channels doe here disburthen themselves as in one pleasant and mighty stream. One Instrument alone well tuned, will make good musick in Gods ears; but he delights much in these prayers in consort; where sundry two or three symphonize in what they ask, it shall be done. Matth. 18. 19. For there is Christ in the midst of them when thus gathered together in his name, vers. 20.

*Reason 7.*

Its a publick ingaging and uniting of hearts.

7 Because publick prayer is a publick engaging and compacting of the hearts and spirits of Gods faithfull ones. Acts 2. 42. They continued stedfastly in Prayers, vers. 44. And all that beleevved were together, and had all things common. Zeph. 3. 9. That they may all call upon him to serve him, with one consent;

or one shoulder, (as it is in the Hebrew.) As if the former were means of the latter. The joynt exercises of mutual graces in the common work breedeth and feedeth love and mutual respect. As it is with any two or three Ministers, or other godly persons using to pray most together, they love and cleave most together; as Musicians that use to play often in consort together, they use to be most friendly to each other. So is it in an Assembly of persons conscionably exercised in publick prayer. Let us now apply the consideration of this publick prayer as our duty.

First, In way of reproof of such who come not constantly, or if they do, they come not seasonably to publick prayer; but they come dropping in when the duty is half, or almost finished. These write not after their copy set them in that representative of pure worship in Gospel-Churches, *Rev. 4. 8, 9, 10. When the four living creatures* (representing the Officers) *are to lead the rest*, and to begin and carry on the publick worship, the rest of the Congregation (represented by twenty four Elders for their gravity and experience in matters of the Gospel) they are also present, ready to fall down, in testimony of their joynt accord in the Worship. And observe it, none of the number are wanting. There is not a third, or fourth part, or half; or three parts of the company, (as too oft

*Use 1.  
Evils of not,  
or late coming  
to publick  
prayer.*

with us, when to give glory to God in prayer and thanksgiving) but there are the whole assembly of Gods (spiritual Priests by profession and holy calling, the whole twenty four. This also is not according to the expresse pattern of the Primitive Church and the members there, they continued stedfastly as in other parts of worship, so in prayer: and the word [ προσευχεσθῆντες ] noteth their ready attendance upon the same, as well as their continuance therein. The same word is used *Acts 10. 7.* for the *Souldiers waiting upon Cornelius*, and of Rulers attending on their work, *Rom. 13. 6.* But for the further whetting and sharpening this admonition: consider,

I.  
It is a sin of  
Omission.

First, that it is a Sin of Omission, such doe not joyn in a duty of publick Worship, to which each of the Assembly are bound: being therefore publick, as that which concerneth all; such doe not give the Lord this holy Sacrifice in the time of it. God is not now less interested in the time of his Worship, as well as in the Worship it self, than of old, *Numbers 28. 2.* *You shall observe to offer them in due season.* The very Prince, who of all other hath weighty occasions lying upon him to withdraw, or delay his coming into the Assembly, in the time of publick Worship under the Gospel (allusively represented under notions proper to that of the Law) yet *Ezek. 46. 10.* *And the Prince in the midst of them when they goe in, shall*

*shall goe in, and when they goe forth, shall goe forth.* He is to bee there with the first, and stay till the last : all the professed subjects and lovers of Jesus Christ are to watch daily at his Gates, and wait at the posts of his doors, *Proverbs 8. 33, 34.* They are therefore to be in readines, as those who watch and wait for an holy opportunity of Christs Publick Ordinances and Worship, and so of this of prayer among the rest, or else they break rule, neglect their duty. How unsuitably doe such walk to the example of other godly people abroad, mentioned in *Luke 1. 21.* *The people were there all waiting till Zachary had done offering incense :* and *Exod. 35.* mention is made of troops of Women assembling at the door of the Tabernacle, *i Sam. 2. 22.* Yet women in regard of family occasions of Children, and the like ( if any ) might have been excused. *Peter* and *John* went to the Temple at the hour of prayer. The Tabernacle and Temple then ( where they were wont to assemble ) had publick prayers offered up among other services : And not less diligence in ready attending, publick worship and prayer, among the rest, is prophesied of, as in these days of the Gospel; witness that, *Psal. 110. 3.* *Thy people shall bee willing* (or free and forward sacrificers) *in the day of thy power,* *Esa. 60. 8.* *Who are these that fly like Doves to the windows?* *Zach. 8. 21.* *Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord* ( say the Gentiles ) *and to seek the Lord: I will go also.*



2 Its matter o  
fist offence to f  
others.

2 It is a scandalous evill; it offendeth the godly part of the Assembly, which are there seasonably to joyn in the duty. And the Officers also, *whose spirits they are not to grieve*, Heb. 13. 17. For the unseasonable coming in of some, and then of others, disturbeth Ministers and people present, and occasionally, hindreth their continued fervency, and interrupteth attention upon that worship in hand; it occasionally hardeneth luke-warm and back-sliding Christians in their neutrality of respect to the parts of publick worship, and prophaner persons in their grosser neglects and contempts thereof. When they see Professors, haply of note, and name, bee so slack and slighty in their attendance thereon.

3 Its a sympt-  
tome of a bad  
estate,

3 The ordinary practice of such careless coming to joyn in publick prayer, before other publick worship performed in the Assembly, is a speaking symptome of an evill estate in persons guilty of it. Christ hath had little power on their hearts, who are no more ready and forward sacrificers. *Psalms. 110. 3.* Such upon whom hee hath power; being willing and forward that way, it strongly argueth that such want a publick spirit, love to the publick good, through sense of publick evils, and that they have little love to publick Ordinances, or delight in publick fellowship with the Saints, as being so constantly careless of seasonable addressing themselves to publick prayet, wherein all  
those

those are to the life expressed.

4 Such cannot so groundedly expect a blessing upon other publick Ordinances then dispenced, as the word preached, or the like, which regard not to joyn in publick prayer for the same. Wherefore let all such who profess the fear of God, bee afraid any more to grieve his Spirit, or the spirits of his Saints, by any such remissness and slackness in attending upon an Ordinance so precious and prevailing with the Lord; yea let them blush, that in Popish times of superstitious blindness, so many should from blinde zeal bee so forward in awaiting Latine service, (to say nothing of other service, and Common-prayer lately discarded, in attending whereupon too many have placed their main Religion) and Christians in these precious times of Gospel, light, and liberty, should be no more forward to improve that liberty of pure worship of God (as other wayes) so in publick prayer, which both Christ hath purchased so dearly, and for which the Saints have wrestled so much with God, and consisted with so many difficulties with men.

4 Strips us of a publick blessing.

The second Use therefore may serve to exhort all the people of God to seasonable, conscionable attendance upon Publick prayer, presented in an holy manner in his Churches, by such as the Lord calleth thereunto; let not God have any cause to complain, that Publick calling upon God is out of re-

The second use of Exhortation to attend upon publick prayer

quest with us, *Esa. 43. 22.* he accounteth we are weary of him, if neglectful of that, *Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.* Surely, the Lord hath magnified his faithfulness in bringing us strangers into his holy mountain, according to *Isa. 56. 7.* and is as ready to make us joyful in his house of prayer, if we are not wanting to our own souls. God honours this part of his Worship before others; and therefore by a synecdoche putteth it for his whole worship; his house of Worship he calls a house of Prayer, as being a choise part of his worship. Neglect that, neglect all; as being that which instrumentally putteth life and lustre into all other parts of worship, their Burnt-offerings (saith God there) shall be accepted; *For my house shall be called an house of prayer*: Look then that we put special honour upon this Ordinance; Yea, these instrumentally occasion more honour to God; Prayers made in *Zion* have their answers: God is a God honouring Church-Prayer also, and therefore hath Church-Praises too, *Praise waiteth for him in Zion,* *Psal. 65. 1, 2.* *As gifts are bestowed by occasion of many, so thanks come to be given by many,* *2 Cor. 1. 11.* And who would not then (if they love the Lord) bee ready to give a lift to such honour of his name? Yea, wee shall come to have more abundant honour by it in the eyes of others, to bee stiled and owned as (under God) helpers to them

in the attaining of such and such begged blessings; you also helping by your prayers (saith *Paul*) to the Church of *Corinth*. In a word, it is the priviledge of the Saints, purchased at a dear rate by Jesus Christ, by whose cause it is that *their enmity being slain*, Ephes. 2. 16. *both such as were nigh, and such as were as farre off*, vers. 17. *through him have both an access by one spirit, unto the Father*, vers. 18. *and are fellow Citizens*, vers. 19. And as such, they trade with God publickly, as well as privately in prayer, for the furtherance of the whole Cities good, and every part thereof. There is a City Treasury of Prayers, from which oft-times, even other decayed Citizens (instrumentally) get relief. Many a decayed Parish (as I may call it) in the great City of God, in the Church universal, is raised again by it, and many a back-sliding Christian raised up again by it; as others keep that blessed stock going for us, so should we for them.

And as a means the more to further us this way, let every gracious person make conscience to quicken up each other to this duty. So these Converts doe, *Zach. 8. 21.* *Come let us go speedily to pray before the Lord: I will goe also.*

## CHAP. IV.

## Of Private or Family Prayer.

Family prayer  
distinguished.

**H**AVING spoken of the first branch of continued Prayer, even Publick Prayer; we must now speak of Private or Family Prayer, required also implicitly in this indefinite injunction, *Pray without ceasing*: respecting the Families in the Church of *Thessalonica*, as well as the whole Church collectively considered. Family Prayer is either extraordinary or ordinary, both are duties in their seasons: Of extraordinary Family Prayer, such as to which fasting is joyned, is that, *1 Cor. 7. 5. That yee may give your selves to fasting and prayer*, namely, considered as members of the Family privately, as of the Church publicly, whether upon occasion of removal, which may and must be done by one Family alone, sometimes, as well as by many Families joyning together at other times, *Ezra 8. 25. That we may seek a right way for us, and our little ones, &c.* upon occasion also of Publick loss of some pious Rulers, as those of the *Jews*, did for *Josias*, *2 Chron. 34. 24, 25, 26.* Unto which allusion is made, *Zach. 12. 11, 12.* And many other occasions might be instanced on this way. Ordinary Private prayer in Families, is either occasional, or more properly oeconomicall; occasional Private Prayer is when divers godly acquaintance of  
sundry



undry Families do meet in some one family to pray and to edifie one another, unto which such places look, *Mal. 3. 16. Jude 20. Col. 4. 12. James 5. 13, 14, 15, 16.* of which I might declare the manifold precious uses and benefits, but I forbear : that which we intend chiefly to speak to, as our duty implicately here injoynd, is not that which is Prayer in the Family, but that which is properly oeconomicall, or Prayer of the Christian family, *Ephes. 6. 18. Pray with all manner of prayer*, reacheth also this manner of Prayer by the family. Christian families are, or should be Churches, wherein the Master of the family should offer up acceptable Prayers and Praises to God. *Paul* writing to *Philemon* in his Epistle, *vers. 19.* mentioneth not his prayer alone, but others with him, *I trust through your prayers I shall be given to you, vers. 22. and vers. 2.* hee mentioneth the Church in his house : *Cornelius* is commended for his prayer always, or upon all occasions, *Acts 10. 2. He prayed to God alway*, viz. as in his house alone, so with his family : hence such care had, that the prayers of man and wife bee not hindred, *1 Pet. 3. 7.* meaning their joynt prayers together in the family, as wel as those severally made in their closets. *Pour out thy wrath upon the families which call not on thy Name, Jer. 10. 24.* Which notion of families comprehendeth Housholds, as *Ioshua 7. 14. The families shall come by households*, and a sad curse

Family prayer proved to be a duty.  
Rom. 16. 3. 5.  
Col. 4. 15.

curse then is upon the Household which are not conscionable of this duty of Household or Family prayer. God would have the *houses of his people dedicated*, Deut. 20. 5. namely, to holy uses, and this of Household prayer especially; and *Psalms* 30. Title, *David* therefore mentioneth the Dedication of his House: hence such care also in the godly Patriarchs in the removals of themselves and Household, still to be building Altars to call upon God; so *Abraham*, Gen. 12. 8. 13. 18. And thus did *Isaak*, Gen. 26. 25. Thus did *Jacob*, Gen. 33. 20. and 35. 1. God chargeh *Jacob* to goe up to Bethel, and there make an Altar to him, and vers. 2, 3. *Jacob* applieth the charge to his Household, saying *Let us arise, and goe up to Bethel*; and as a godly man, *Jacob* must pray alone, and did, Gen. 32. 25, 26, 27, 28. with *Hof.* 12. 3, 4. *he made supplication*: but considered as a Master of a Family, it is not enough to send away his Household over *Jabbock*, and make supplication alone; but he must pray, and offer up Sacrifice with his Family: yea, in that sense *Jacob* rightly expoundeth the charge of God, bidding him to arise, and goe up to Bethel, to refer to his Household too, --- *let us goe up to Bethel*, Gen. 35. 1, 3. compared: his whole Household, Wives, Children, Sojourners, Servants, all must goe up to Bethel, and joyn in the Worship, none must be absent. Reasons inforcing this duty,

1. Because God promised actual respects,

Reasons why.  
1. From Gods  
acceptance,

and acceptance of his peoples prayers indefinitely, are extendable to his peoples prayers with the family, as well as congregation, or those in their closets : *while they speak there also he will hear*, Esa. 65. 24. *His ears are open to their cries* there also, Psal. 34. 11. Cornelius his prayers then also came up in remembrance before God, Acts 10. 1, 2, 3, 4. Paul is given to the prayers of Philemon and his household-Church, Phile. 1, 2, 22. compar'd.

2. Because the Lord poureth out a spirit of grace and supplication to be exercised with the several households in their Tribes, as well as alone by the *Husbands and Wives apart*, Zach. 12. 11, 12. *They shal mourn (in their prayers which with contrite hearts they pour out) the families apart, and their wives apart*, whether in an extraordinary way of prayer with fasting, or in an ordinary.

Reasf, 2.  
From Gods  
fitting his  
Saints for that  
service.

3 Because Family occasions being also sanctified by prayer, 1 Tim. 4. call for it : as Saul with his Military family would first seek God for good success, 1 Sam. 13. 11, 12. So should the Guides of other families before their Families set about their occasions. Yea, family sins call for this plaister to bee as large as the sore : out of fear Job would sanctifie his family day by day, when to goe abroad a feasting, Job 1. 5. *Hee sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all ; for Job said, it may bee that my Sons have sinned ; and cursed God*

Reasf. 3.  
From family  
occasions.

*Reas. 4.*  
From family  
piety promo-  
ted.

*in their hearts* : Thus did *Iob* continually.

4 Because family prayer is a special means to season the family with a religious fear and respect to God and his ways, *Act. 10. 2.* *Cornelius a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, he prayed to God always.* Godly *Onesiphorus* house is a very Seminar to the Church. He who is so much exercised this way, hath a Church in his house, as before shewed. A godly praying *Abraham* the Master, will come to have a gracious praying *Eliazar* the servant, who is the fittest for choicest service, *Gen. 24. 12.*

*Reas. 5.*

From family  
disorders pre-  
vented.

5 Family prayer is a special means to prevent family disorders; and to keep every one therein, in their station and duty. When the Apostle, *Coloss. 3. 18.* to Chap. 4. 1. hath enjoined husband, wife, father, child, Master and servants, the several parts of the family their general duties, he closeth all with this as an help and means to all the first, *Coloss. 4. 2.* *Continue in prayer, &c.* When each one in the Family heareth their several Sins confessed, pardon thereof begged, grace against them pleaded for; it is a quickning admonition and help against them. It helps to wean their hearts from inordinacies in matter of cares, fears, or desires, and the like, respecting worldly matters, or occasions, *Let your moderation appear to all men. Be careful for nothing,* saith Paul, *Phil. 4. 5, 6.* But what means should wee use for that end? *In every thing by prayer, make your request*



request known to God. ver. 7. *The peace of God shall guard your hearts and minds.* These are sacred fruits of prayer in the family, as well as Congregation, or Closet.

6 Because servants usually want frequent opportunities of secret prayer, and this way by the advantage of family prayer they are much helped.

*Reas. 6.*  
From want of opportunities to servants.

7 Because Christ himself is a Pattern herein of whom as we read, that he was oft exercised in secret prayer alone; so twice it is recorded of him, as thus praying with his family privately, or with his Disciples which ordinarily abode with him, *Luk. 9. 18* *As he was alone in a certain place praying, when he had done, one of his Disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray, &c.* It is a sign that his Disciples were with him then in private at his prayer; and that his praying in such sort was a lively means to do them more good, and to quicken and enamour them with holy desires to pray in like sort. Now let us proceed to consider of some cases and questions touching this.

*Reas. 7.*  
From Christs example.

*Quest. Who must pray in the family?*

*Ans.* The Master of the family in special-wise. Husbands must dwell with their Wives as men of knowledge, that their prayers be not hindred, *1 Pet. 3. 2.* Namely, by any defects of theirs in the business of praying with them (as well as otherwise) for want of abilities that way, *Coloss. 4. 1.* The Apostle writing to *Masters of their duty*, *Coloss. 4. 1.* adjoyneth in the next place,

*Quest. 1.*  
Who must pray in family.  
Is the Masters duty.



For he is or  
should be an  
holy Priest.

(as nextly concerning them as heads of the family) *Continue in prayer.* Only *Cornelius* of all the house who feared God is mentioned as *praying always*, *Act. 10. 2.* If the rest feared God, surely they prayed oft alone. But in the family *Cornelius* himself was more constantly employed as the mouth of the rest. For indeed, every gracious Master of a family is an *holy Priest to God*, *Rev. 16.* not as a gracious man only to offer for himself, but as a gracious Master also in relation to his family, to offer up sacrifice of prayer and praise on their behalf. And the Priests of old, as Masters of families, had their offerings for themselves and families, *Levit. 21. 11.* as well as Officers to the Church, they had their offerings for the Congregation, *vers. 15.*

2.  
To undertake  
in matters for  
God for the  
family.

2 In that prayer being one special part of Gods service and worship, a godly Master undertakes for himself and household to attend it, *Iosh. 24. 15.* *But as for mee and my house, we will serve the Lord:* namely joyntly as well as severally; and so to pray together as well as asunder. And if the Master be the chief undertaker that way, it is fit hee should be the chief actor in it.

3.  
He is to be a  
Prophet in his  
family.

3 In that Masters of Families ought to teach their children diligently the word and precepts of God, and speak of them in their house when they lye down, and when they rise up, namely, the first that they do dayly at morning, and the last thing at evening.

Now

Now if it be so in instructing their family, then to be a praying too for a blessing on that and other exercises and endeavours, *Deut. 6. 7.* Yea, practically they will instruct them in obedience to the first & fifth Commandements, when they give such good examples to their families of praying to the Lord with them and for them. *Abraham had both ways instructed his family, Gen. 18. 19.* and so had Christ and *John Baptist* also their respective families, *Luk. 11. 1, 2.* Teach us to pray, as John taught his Disciples, practically as well as doctrinally.

*Quest. May not, yea must not the Wife in Quest. some cases pray with the family?*

*Ans. Yes, in case of absence or sickness of her husband, for shee is to be a help like him, Gen. 2. 18.* Namely in all such communicable Duties and Services respecting the family. *So is the law of kindness to be in the good Wifes mouth, to instruct them as occasion is offered, Prov. 31. 26.* In which (as in sundry other respects) her Husband may and must trust to her, verse 11. If God call him from home, hee hath a gracious Wife to whom he can safely leave the trust of his family for matters of Religion, such as family worship of God is, as well as those of this life. If that an adulterous Wife can pretend this as a part of her Religion, that when the Goodman was not at home, shee had payed that day her vows, *Prov. 7. 14.* Godly Matrons should really make conscience of

In what cases the Wife must pray in the family, even in cases 1. Of husbands absence or sickness.

of that which the other doth hypocritically pretend. *The godly Wife will look well to the ways of her household*, Prov. 31. 27. that they be well exercised this way, as well as any other way. *The wife is compared to the Moon, the husband to the Sun*, & Gen. 37. 9. so Jacob and his family are represented. Now the wife then as the Moon, may and must chiefly give forth her spiritual light and influence in the family, in the absence of her husband, who is as the Sun thereto.

2 In case of the unregeneracy, and spiritual inabilities of the husband, she is to supply his defects.

*Quest. 1.*

A godly servant may also do it in some cases.

*Quest. Whether may not a godly servant perform this duty of prayer?*

*Ans.* Yes, first in case of the absence or sickness of both the Family-guides. A godly *Onesimus* may this way amongst many others be profitable to his Master, Philem. 11. Secondly, in case of special praying abilities given such an one, and denied the guides of the family. In this respect also such a servant may be owned and improved as a brother, Philem. 16. This way also God may and often doth make such of his Saints a blessing to the places and houses where they are, Ezek. 34. 26. Zach. 8. 13.

*Quest. 2.*

A godly stranger may do it in some cases.

*Quest. May not one not of the family be occasionally desired to pray in it?*

*Ans.* Yes, every ones spiritual gift being given of God with respect to others good as well as their own, and members being

being to lend help to the rest, as occasion is offered; yea, as *Pauls* and *Cephas*, and *Apollus* gifts are the Saints to improve occasionally, so are other gifts likewise. *Many were met together praying*, *Act. 12. 12.* Now one, and then another of other Families prayed by course in *Marks* mothers Family. Onely as the Church in that case intimateth her case to those shee would have seek the Lord for her, *Cant. 5. 8, 10.* some hints would bee given to such, or some special things respecting the Family, which they should in prayer with them commend to the Lord.

Who must bee present at Family prayer with the Master thereof praying?

*Quest.*

All the whole Family must joyn with the Master of it, as wife, children, servants, or sojourners; none should ordinarily bee absent: All *Jacobs* household were to joyn with him and set themselves to worship God with him in *Bethel*, *Gen. 35. 1, 2, 3.* only he is principally to act therein *vers. 3.* *Arise, let us go up to Bethel, and there I will build an Altar to the Lord, &c.*

*Answ.*

All of the Family should be present at Prayers

Reasons hereof: 1 From the care of all, and each of their souls which lyeth upon the Masters of the Family. It was typen of old by that *Exod. 16. 16.* they were to provide *Manna* for all their households according to their eating. *Exod. 12. 4* they were to provide a Lamb for their household according to their eating. So *Levit. 16. 11, 17.* the Priests

2 They are all the Guides charge



as Masters of their Families, were to offer up Sacrifice, as for themselves, so for the cleansing of their household sins. *David* as a King prayeth with, and for his people first, *that the Lord would bless them*, 2 Sam. 16. 18. but as a guide of his own household, his care is to return thither to bless them, 2 Sam. 6. 20. or pray for a blessing upon them, vers. 20. And hence by the blessing of God on such godly care of guides of Families, as well as on other means, Families have become Churches, *Rom.* 16. 4, 5.

2 They are in extraordinary Family prayer to be present with the Guides.

The second Reason is taken from the proportion of ordinary private worship, and seeking of God in an ordinary way, to that of seeking the Lord in an extraordinary way. Many causes might exempt sundry of the Family in this case rather than the other. Yet in such a case *Hester* will have all the Maids to fast and pray with her, *Hest.* 4. 16. The whole Families apart do also in an extraordinary manner humble themselves thus before the Lord, *Zach.* 12. 10, 11, 13.

3 They must all attend the Guides in Publick praier.

The third Reason from the proportion of our private Worship, and seeking of the Lord in a private manner to that of seeking God in publick with our Families. All and everyone as far as any way capable, are therein to be present as *Dent.* 12. 7. and 14. 26. and 16. 11. and other Scriptures shew, and there fore also herein.

4 They all

The fourth Reason, because the whole Family



Family do or may share in the blessings upon the Family; and therefore it is meet they should joyn in Family prayer and praises for them. Both children, servants, and sojourners were thankfully to rejoyce before the Lord upon this ground, *because God blessed his peoples increase, and the labours of their hands*, Deut. 16. 12, 14, 15.

share alike in Family blessings.

The fifth Reason, because the whole household is something involved in the guilt of the sin of the guides, who thereby trouble their houses, *Prov. 15. 27.* as *Achan* did his. Meet it is therefore, that all of them should partake in the good gifts and services of their guides, and with them seek to divert the evils which may else bring judgement on the Family.

They are all liable to Family guilt.

Quest. Suppose some of the servants be ungodly, must a godly Guide pray with them?

Quest.

Ans. 1. Care would be had that wee look out the faithfullest to dwell with us, *Psal. 131. 6.*

Ans. 1.

2 If others be cast upon us, yet we are to joyn with them at this Family worship, because they are not to be denied the help of any appointed Means which may further their Spiritual good, as in publick, so in private; we may, and must pray with, and for all sorts, who have not sinned a sin unto death, as one means of their being saved, *1 Tim. 2. 21, 2. James 5. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.* A sinner may com: thereby to be turned from

the error of his way. Onely prayer with such would bee shaped in many particulars, so as their particular cases may bee laid open before the Lord.

*Quest.*

*Quest. Suppose some one of the Family bee more obstinate, and either refuse to joyn with the Family; or if present, doth occasion usually wrath and disturbance there.*

*Ans. 1.*

*Ans. 1. That Rule, 1 Thess. 5. 14. respects all in either relation, and so Masters in theirs, to admonish the unruly, and when they have done, to have patience towards all sorts; as Ministers in their places towards their people, are in meekness to instruct them that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. So are Masters in their lesser Assemblies. Christ the Master of his household (as he calls himself, Matth. 20. 25.) did not refuse to pray with them, though Judas was amongst his household Disciples, and he knew him to be a Devil, John 6. 70, 71.*

*2 The help of the Magistrate is seasonably to be uled, if patience in the use of faire means avail not, For he is a terror to evill doers, Rom. 13. 4.*

*3 If neither means work amendment such as make deceit their work and trade in lying, ever and anon telling lyes, notwithstanding all means used to reclaim them, should not abide in any godly Davids house, Psal. 101. 7. The Bond-servant childe, who will be scoffing at the promised Seed,*

Seed, and persecuting him, must out with his mother, and all from *Abrahams* Family, *Gen. 21. 9. 10. 12.*

*Quest. What is to be done in case of occasional scattering of the Family, as when many of Jacobs Family are occasioned to be in Dothan, divers miles distant from the rest of the household; or that Moses must bee in Egypt, and his Family in Midian? Exod. 18. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*      *Quest.*

In answer hereunto, let us shew some cases wherein it may be lawfull for the Guides of the Family to be absent from the whole, or part of the Family for a season. Let us annex some Cautions about it.      *Ans<sup>w</sup>.*

To the first I answer, Such absence may be lawful.

1 When it is occasioned by zealous attendance on the means of Grace which they want where they are, as when those of the Tribes are fain to travel far to the Worship of God at *Jerusalem*, *Psalm. 84. 6, 7.* and *Matth. 15. 32.* Diverse there were for divers dayes absent from their Families attending upon Christs Ministry, and not reprov'd for it, but encouraged to it, as appears by the miraculous provisions made for them.      1 Guides may be absent.

2 When its occasioned from the persecution by the enemies of Grace; as those Priests and Levites were forced to flye from *Jeroboams* to *Rehoboams* jurisdiction, there to provide for their Families, which shortly

after followed them with other people,  
*1 Chron. 11. 16, 17.*

3 When it is occasioned from personal Callings and Offices to bee exercised in places distant from part of their Families, at least as those Levites and Priests, leaving their suburbs, and part of their Families, with their Flocks in their fields, &c. *Nam. 35. 2, 3, 4. Nehem. 13. 10, 11.* So *Moses* for a time disposed of his wife and children to bee in *Midian* with her sons, whilst he more fully attends his work in *Egypt*, *Exod. 18. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* in which case Seafaring men of *Zabulon*, Merchants and Mariners are encouraged by the Lord to *rejoyce in their going out*, *Deut. 33. 18.* So military men, albeit they had dedicated their houses to holy Services; yea, the rather because they had done it, they must out to the Wars, *Deut. 2. 1, 5.*

4 When it is occasioned from necessary Travels and journeying, as in that Parable of the Noble man journeying far off, and leaving Matters to his servants, *Luke 19. 12, 13.* and *Matth. 24. 46, 47, 48.* So *Jacob's* Sons go into *Egypt* once and again from their wives and their children to buy corn, *Gen. 42. & 43.* So upon more weighty occasions of publick Messages from States, *2 Sam. 20. 2.* or of changes, as *Epaphroditus* Teacher at *Philippi*, *Phil. 2. 25.* yet sent to *Rome* to minister to *Paul's* necessities, *Phil. 4. 18. 22.* So others, *2 Cor. 8. 23.*

The Cautions are two : First, That all wise and lawful means be used for a seasonable compacting of the Family in such sort, that neither they nor wee live too solitary, lest that befall us which did *Lot* and his Daughters in the Mountain, *Gen. 19. 30, 31, 33.*

3 Let us appoint some godly servants or sons over that part of the Family where neither of the Guides can bee usually present.

*When is Family Prayer to bee performed?* *Quest.*

Morning and Evening, as of old they had their daily Sacrifice respecting the household Morning and evening, *Numb. 28. 3, 4.* the two special seasons of household instruction, fittest to bee so sanctified and honoured, *Deut. 6. 4.* The widows which shew their piety at home in Prayers, there also (as well as otherwise) are to do it *night and day,* *1 Tim. 5. 4, 5.*

*Ans.*

Concerning the time of Family prayer Morning and Evening.

*Quest. Whether should not Family prayer bee first performed in the Morning (as much as in us lyeth) before any other thing be done?* *Quest.*

*Ans. Yes,* when we rise up its best doing of it, *Deut. 6. 7.* For first, It is meet that God, and not our selves, or others should have the first of our daily time, and the first fruits of the services of our souls and bodies daily; which are given, and preserved, and daily loaden with his blessings by him.

*Ans. 1.*



The first day of the week is now his day, and the first of each day should bee (as much as may bee) devoted in this sense to him. And if it cannot be so soon in the Family, yet let them have it in the Closet. *David* would not put off God till noon (as too many of us do) and make no morning of it, for prayer in Family, as well as Closet, *But at morning and evening, and at noon he will bee praying and praising of God, Plal. 55. 17.*

2 That at our uprising the Family is unscattered, which haply severed, is not easily gathered in any season.

3 Then if at all, before heads and hearts are actually busied, in and on outward occasions and employments, are mindes and hearts fittest for God.

4 It is most seasonable, sanctifying and begging thereby of a blessing upon the dayes occasions, before we have begun to meddle with them.

5 In the interim of some few hours space, wherein Morning Family prayer is deferred, some sad disasters may befall some of the Family, which then must needs be the more grievous. *Job* fearing this, through some miscarriages of his children at their Festivals, sends for them each day, and (as it is) *day by day sanctified them, Job 1. 5.*

Use.

Motives it.

Let us now wince up all in a word of Exhortation, to a conscionable performance of this duty, and attendance thereupon; and the rather,

1 In that the Lord hath honoured family prayer also as well as other prayer, with special respect; as to those of *Cornelius* his Prayers with his Household, as well as to those in his house alone, *Act. 10. 2, 4.* whence he and his got more clear knowledge of Jesus Christ, as that promised Messiah, in whom they more confusedly believed before. Besides the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they also attained, as the sequel in the Chapter sheweth.

1. Blessings  
got by it.

2 Even Family Prayer hastens ruine upon the Churches enemies bent to destroy them. When God will seek to destroy Nations which will come up against *Jerusalem*, *Zach. 12. 9.* there is a mighty spirit of prayer shining in good families. Hee then poureth out upon *Jerusalems* Inhabitants such a spirit of grace & supplication, as that they are mourning in prayer before him, both privately and secretly; Families apart, and Wives, godly persons apart, *Zac. 10. 11, 12.*

2. Enemies  
ruine hastned  
by it.

3 Family prayer is a very good means to clear even the house from any secret Curse, which as a Leprosie by reason of Sin, may take hold (as it were) of the very timber and walls thereof, as *Lev. 34. 34, 35.* *Zach. 5. 4.* *Prov. 3. 33.* Let us hereby dedicate the house to God; but in the practise hereof, observe these things.

3. It helps to  
keep off any  
curse.

1 Look that the Household bee beforehand cleansed of any known and grosser evils,

Rules about it

1. Rid the family of gross sins.

vils which may lye upon it, or any in it; as *Jacobs* Houshold-gods must bee put away before he go up to *Bethel* with them, there to Worship the Lord, *Gen.* 35. 2, 3.

2. Let Husband and wife carry it well to each other.

2 Let the Guides of the Family, as the Husband and Wife, look to it, that their mutual carriage each to other bee amiable and regular, that so the family Prayers bee not hindred, 1 *Pet.* 3. 7.

3. Take a little time to prepare for it.

3 Let there be some little space of withdrawing from other words or works before we set about the duty : with one breath, to be speaking, and carnally; or to bee but then talking of a very Swine, and forthwith, without any more ado, rudely and unpreparedly to begin so solemn a speech to the great God, it is very unseemly, and very irreverent.

## CHAP. V.

### *Touching Closet Prayer.*

**W**E come now to the third branch of solemn and continued Prayer; namely, Secret and Closet Prayer : the injunction reacheth, as the Church of *Thessalonica*, collectively considered as a Church, and the families there as Christian families; so

So each particular Christian there personally considered, what he is to doe apart, as well as what he is to do as a member of the Congregation or Family; and by Analogy every other Christian is bound and concerned in this Precept, to pray alone also, and that *without ceasing*, Mat. 6. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy Closet, and when thou hast shut to thy door, pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, &c.* he saith not, when [you] pray, but [thou] when [thou] prayest, enter into thy closet, &c. as speaking not so much of a joynt Duty of many together, as of a duty which each person is to do alone, as in the other, verse 3. *When thou doest thy alms, &c.* It is an injunction not so much of what the godly are to do in some joynt way of Charity, but what each gracious person is to do apart and alone as occasion is offered, even when or where none else haply can, or will do as they do. So *Chemnitius*, *Cartwright*, *Aretius*, and *Musculus* upon *Mat. 6. 6.* they expound this of prayer in retired places. And albeit the intent of Christ bee not meercly to prescribe closet Prayer in that Scripture, as each Christians proper duty, and much less to prescribe it as all the prayer which hee calleth for from his people; yet we may safely conclude, that he therein commendeth, & commandeth closet prayer of each Christian alone by himself, as one special way of praying to him, who seeth in secret, and



as that wher ein they shall give a special testimony of their sincerity, and avoyd that vain-glorious affectation of mens praise, which the Lord Jesus there blameth in the Scribes and Pharisees.

Touching this Duty then, consider wee,  
1. Who must pray thus alone. 2. Why?  
And 3. What use wee are to make thereof.

Each coe must  
pray alone.

Touching the first, we say, none are excepted who are of understanding to know what they are to doe therein; whether younger or elder, high or low, rich or poor, bond or free, Male or Female, as they are all one in point of dignity & priviledge in Christ Jesus, *Colos. 3. 11. Gal. 3. 27, 28.* as they have and profess each of them an interest in him, who is, and seeth in secret, as their Father, *Matth. 6. 6. Pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, &c.* Every one severally apart, as well as joyntly together, is to cry in secret also, *Abba Father, Gal. 4. 6.* the very Wives apart must be improving their spirit of Supplication in an humble and contrite manner, as well as together with their family; yea sometimes in an extraordinary manner must they thus mourn, even pray and fast apart; and therefore much more may they, must they pray contritely in an ordinary way, when apart from the rest of the family; the Wives who have so many occasions more then others, from little ones, and other Houshold affairs, to take



1. take up their time above others, yet are not exempted from this holy exercise, and therefore by proportion none else are exempted from it.

Touching the second. The Reasons enforcing this duty, are

I Taken from the Promise of God, partly undertaking that it shall bee so, that his people shall bee enabled to pray apart by themselves, and shall exercise themselves therein, as *Zach. 12. 10, 11, 12, 13.* he promiseth to pour upon them the spirit of Supplication, and that they should mourn or pray in an humble and contrite manner, by themselves alone : and partly from his promise to his people, when at any time thus exercised in secret prayer when none else sees them, when, or how, or how long they pray, *he will reward them openly*, partly in this life. All shall see, and manifestly perceive by the fruit thereof, that *Isaac, Hannah, and Zacharias* did pray alone to their heavenly Father for the fruit of the womb. The Holy Ghost recordeth it in the Scriptures, and thereby holdeth it forth to the view of every eye to whom the Word shall come, how honourably God hath accepted and rewarded secret prayer. All shall see, that *Moses* is wont to bee with God alone by his manifest and notable prevailing with God : if he but go aside and pray to the Lord, blinded *Pharaoh* himself shall do it, and therefore is often entreating his pray-  
ers

Reasons why.

1. Gods promise undertaking and encouraging it.

ers for him and his people, *Exodus* 8. and 9. and 10. so the *Jews* could not but perceive it, whence they recourse oft to him to pray for them, *Numb.* 11. 1, 2. and 21. 7, 8, 9. and the places shew a manifest reward of that his praying, granted and given out thereupon. How openly did God reward *Daniel*, who was wont to pray to his God in secret, *Dan.* 9. 10. with manifest deliverance from so great a death, *vers.* 23. and with the notable ruine brought upon those, who would have forbidden and hindred him from that holy exercise of his, but three days together, *vers.* 5, 6, 7. and 10, 11, 12, 24. compared: The more the Saints do thus secretly also acquaint themselves with God, the more notable good shall come to them, the very light of God shall shine upon the ways of such; the very Island, where they are, shall fare the better for them, *Job* 22. 21, 27, 28, 30. compared. And as in this life, so in that which is to come, will God reward them openly, when *God will bring every secret work to judgement* of remuneration, *Ecc.* 12. 14. when the Saints shall receive according to the good they have done in the body, *2 Corinth.* 5. 10. Then shall their secret seeking of Gods face also come to light. It shall be shewed before the whole World, how many, and many a time, such and such of Gods hidden ones have been serving him with their spirits, and that they have been, and now fully are, thus and thus graciously reward-

rewarded; not a tear of theirs shed in their pouring out their souls thus before God, but he bottleth up, *Psalms* 56. 8. and at that day it shall appear they were not lost: their Waters at that Wedding day will be turned into Wine.

The second Reason is taken from Divine providence, ordering Closet occasions, fit only for secret expressing and opening them before the Lord, as some secret personal heart-plague, *1 King* 8. 38. Some secret snares layed for this or that Saint of God by men or Devils, as by so many cursed Fowlers. But in the use of this means of calling thus personally and particularly upon God; he delivereth both Christ the Lord, and his members in particular, *Psal.* 91. 3. *He shall deliver thee from the snare of the Fowler, &c.* and ver. 15. *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him, &c.* The Saints by secret prayer doe countermine the secret Stratagems of their subtle enemies, *Psalms* 9. 13, 15, 16.

2. Closet occasions.

The third Reason may be taken from the approved examples of the choycest of Gods Saints this way exercised. As that of *Daniel three times a day*, *Dan* 6. 10. that of *David* as oft, *Psalms* 55. 17. that of *Isaac* using daily to goe out into the fields alone, there to meditate, or pray, (as the *Geneva Bible* reads it) *Gen.* 24. 63. That of the Lord *Jesus*, *Mark* 1. 35. *Early in the morning* (before hee healed the Leper) *hee was praying alone*

3. Examples of the Saints so exercised.

alone in a secret place. And *Luke* { *cha.* 5. 12. 13, 14, 15. compared with *vers.* 16. ) instanteth in a like practise of his, after that cure which he wrought: *He with-drew himself, and went into the Wilderness and prayed*, yet not much space of time betwixt the one and the other, *Luke* 6. 12. *Hee went out into a Mountain, and continued all night in prayer*: and he was then alone; for *vers.* 13. *When it was day, hee called unto him his Disciples*, *Matth.* 14. 22. he sendeth away his Disciples first by ship; and *vers.* 23. *Hee goeth apart into the Mountain to pray*, *Luk.* 21. 27. when hee had been imployed in the day time in preaching, in the night time he went apart into the Mount of Olives; namely, to pray and meditate, *Luke* 22. 41. *Hee was with-drawn from his Disciples about a stone cast, and prayed*. And *vers.* 44. *Hee prayed more earnestly, &c.* and *vers.* 45. *Hee rose up from prayer and came to his Disciples*. And how he prevailed by these very solitary, but strong crys and tears in these days of his flesh, or human infirmity, is testified, *Heb.* 5. 7. *He was heard*.

4. The suitable  
presence of  
God in secret.

The fourth Reason is taken from the suitability of the presence and favour of God, which he is wont in secret to exhibit to them unto their aimes and desires. Their desire is, *Psal.* 4. 7. *Lord lift up thou the light of thy countenance upon us*. And when is the Lord more with his Saints then when in secret? When *Jacob* is alone praying, then *Iehovah*, the



the son of God, that *Angel*, is in such a glorious manner with him, *Gen.* 32. 23, 24, 28, 30. and *Hosea* 12. 3, 4. compared. This being one special way of the Saints walking with God, he cannot but be much in company with them: the nearest and dearest acquaintance and fellowship with God is mentioned by these secret communings with God, and holy whisperings in his ear; the secret chamber is the most futable and freest place for these spouses of the Lord, to be telling their secrets to him; and there is the place where most ordinarily and usually he is wont to meet and greet, and secretly embrace them.

Now let us come to such Objections as are made against this holy exercise: for we may perceive by *Job* 21. 15. that mans carnal heart is ready to cavil against it, and to object, *cui bono*, to what purpose is it, what needeth what profit is it if we pray to him? verily it is an ordinance wherein the Lord is wont very graciously to communicate himself to his Saints, and therefore so long as Satans wily head, and mans deceitfull heart can finde out cavils and quarrels against it, it shall not want for Objections. Many a deadly wound is given to sin, and Satan by these Prayer-darts; which the Saints thus secretly cast at them: besides, it is a most spirituall service, requiring a special measure of sincerity and self-denial, and no wonder that of all other

Objections against it answered.



Duties, mans heart be so backward to this. In prayer with others, there is more to bribe even the carnal heart to bee speaking; but here is little or nothing to move from mans applause, or the like. It is a duty very costly if rightly performed; in secret are the choice wrestlings and weeping, and the like, and mans carnal heart would take the easiest and cheapest way rather: wee are too apt to be objecting against our main spiritual foundations, and no wonder then if against this building work. Wee are too apt to failings and falls, and no wonder if so backward to this closer closet way of making up personal and particular accounts unto the Lord. It were rather a wonder if there were not, than that there are so many Objections against this.

*Object. 1*  
We must labour six days.

*If wee must both pray with the Assembly, and with the Family, and yet also in our closets too alone, will not this too much prejudice our ordinary callings and occasions, and intrench upon that charge of labouring six dayes.*

*Ans. 1*  
True, yet pray also.

The Lord indeed will not have now any more solemn days in the week to be ordinarily set apart onely for his service, besides the Lords day, but yet as of old, when the Jewish Sabbath was in force, the Saints made conscience of constant seeking of God in secret, and are commended for it by the Lord, as *Daniel*, chap. 6. 10. *David*, *Psal.* 55. 17. So now the Jewish Sabbath is abolished,

lished, and the Lords day appointed for God in its stead; yet *Cornelius* is commended, and graciously rewarded for his conscionable praying to God alone day and night; for as *he was praying in his house*, namely by himself alone, *a man in bright cloathing* (or an Angel) *appeared to him, and said, Cornelius, Thy prayer is heard*, Act. 10. 30, 31. not that prayer alone which hee made in that day of Humiliation; but as *vers. 2, 3, 4.* *thew [his prayers]* his prayers which hee made alone, whether with his household, or by himself alone, none else were with him praying then, as it seemeth, for he only saw that man in bright cloathing, to him alone the Angel addressed his present speech, saying, *Cornelius thy prayers are heard. v. 4. 31.* God would not have the hand-maid to perk above the Mistis, or ordinary particular callings to thrust religion out of doors, or so to straiten it, that scarce any leisure is afforded to worship God in publike, private, and secret. Nay, rather clean Christians, typed by those clean beasts, must rightly part the hoof, *Lev. 11. 3.* rightly divide their time, giving a due share thereof, to God in matters of his worship, and a meet proportion of it to God in their particular calling.

2 It is the expresse charge of God that we We must buy  
redeem or buy out time, and that for out time for  
prayer as well as other holy exercises, *Col. prayer,*  
4. 2, 3, 4. the Lord wisheth us to *continue in*  
1 2      *prayer*

Prayer, and verſ. 5. biddeth us *redeem the time*; which Exhortation is directed to all ſorts, Husbands, Wives, Parents, Children, ſervants and Maſters, as the Context ſheweth, from chap. 3. 18. to chap. 4. 6. All and every of them, are to buy out time for inſtant Prayer, as all together in the family, ſo apart in ſecret, as occaſions are offered; the charge is not limited to Church or Family prayer only. Yea but how ſhall we get ſo much time, will they ſay? redeem the opportunity (καιρος) ſaith God. If the Lord offer you any opportunity, to pray together or aſunder, be at any coſt for it. Chriſtians muſt be wiſe and frugal Market-men and women of praying opportunities. Let not the Devil or World out-bid us for ſuch ſeaſons which are ſo gainful to our ſouls. A wiſe *Daniel* will be willing to hazard the loſſe or parting with either honor or pleaſure, or profit, yea, life it ſelf, rather than be debarred from taking his times this way, for God, and for his ſoul, to ſaſtify the wretched deſires of the wicked therein, or to ſeem to yeild to Satans wily ſuggeſtions and plots, in his inſtruments for that end, *Dan.* 6. 10.

We muſt ply  
this as our ho-  
ly Trade.

3 This is a main part of our ſpiritual trading with God, by improvement this way of the Talent of the gift of prayer alſo, *Mat.* 25. 16, 17. This is as a part of our πολιτευμα, our City employment. *Eph.* 2. 19. *Phil.* 3. 20. Having hereby commerce and

and converse with God in Christ, and it is a rich Trade. God is rich in mercy to all that call upon him in secret apart, as well as to others that pray together in Assemblies and Families, *Psal. 86. 5.* Gods Saints and Suppliants, which often come alone to the door of grace, and most frequently do thus knock by prayer, speed best. God alloweth them this private key, that they may freely get in and take of all his precious Treasures of grace as they need the same; *Knock and it shall be opened, ask, and it shall be given, Matth. 7. Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, I will do, John 14. 13.* be it publickly, privately, or secretly, that you ask the same. If others have not, it is because they ask not.

4 Prayer in secret by our selves, as well as that with others, it doth expedite our weightiest temporal affairs. *Jacob* did more this way to issue his great affairs, respecting his families welfare & safety, when to meet his brother *Esau*, with his warlike Troops. than if hee had an equal or greater warlike power, or military skil to have managed the same; *thou hast prevailed with God, & with men thou shalt prevail, Gen. 32. 28.* See. it is the way to have the beauty or glorious blessing, presence, & protection of God upon us, & the prospering of our handy work, to set God thus on work for us by prayer, whence it was, that they of old were taught to pray for that end, as *Psal. 90. 17. Let thy beau-*

*It expedite  
our other af-  
fairs.*



*ty be upon us, prosper thou the work of our hands*  
 This oyls the wheels for any work, quickens and quieteth our spirits, *Phil. 4. 6, 7.* sanctifieth our works, *1 Tim. 4. 4, 5.* If wee can but pray well before hand, we may be sure we shall study well, or preach well, or work well, as our calling requireth, yea, and speed well afterward.

**Object. 2**

Wee are servants.

Some may Object, their condition as being servants, and so think themselves excused and exempted from this Duty of Closet prayer.

**Answer. 1**

This is the work of any servant of God, as such.

The charge of the Text is indefinite, not limited to any sort of persons, no more than that verse *15. Render not evil for evil, but ever follow that which is good;* or that ver. *16. Rejoice evermore;* or that v. *18. In every thing give thanks; &c.* in which godly servants also, as well as others, are concerned. A godly servant considered as his Masters servant, is faithfully to attend his Masters business; but as he is the Lords Servant, so this is one part of his servantly business. When *David* had said, *Psal. 116. 6. I am thy servant, Lord, thy servant, &c.* verse *17.* he addeth, *I will call upon the name of the Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 2. To them that are called to be Saints in Corinth, with all such as call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus in every place,* that is the Saints Character, be they of what calling or condition soever, or where ever they call upon the Lord: God is no respecter of persons, every one who calleth him Father,



ther, is to do this service and honour of a Child to him. *Thou* (whoever thou art, bond or free) *when thou prayest enter into thy closet* (or into some retired place) *and pray to thy father which seeth in secret,* Mat. 6. 6.

2 Every one whether bond or free, they have this part of the new man, resembling Christ the Creator of it, even his holy knowledge also, Col. 3. 10, 11. to know how to call upon God as a father in secret, as hee also did, and to cry in solemn wise, themselves alone, *Abba Father.* Gal. 4. 6.

Each Saint is this way gifted more or lesse,

3 Godly servants also, who have the grace of God which bringeth salvation appearing to them, are as well as others to be peculiar ones unto the Lord, zealous of all good works, and so of this also, wherein Gods choicest servants have been wont to bee conscionably exercised, Tit. 2. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. compared. Other servants will go to prayer with their Masters in publick and private, yea, but Godly ones must do somewhat more, they must improve their peculiar interests in the Lord in such a way of peculiar serving of him with their spirits.

Godly servants also must be Christs peculiar ones.

4 Bond as well as free, being alike interested in the dignity and priviledges of Saints as Saints, Col. 3. 11. they are alike concerned in such Duties as these are, which respect and lye upon the Saints, as Saints,

Their dignity is alike with others, and so is this their duty.

in which respect also, godly servants are the Lords freemen, *1 Cor. 7.22.* they must not abridge themselves, nor may be abridged by others of this liberty, of retired repairs to the Throne of Grace, as the Lord affordeth them opportunity. To bee meer servants of men, so to attend their Masters commands, as to neglect this, or any other command of God, they ought not, *vers. 23.* yea, observe it, that the Apostle speaketh of servants to infidel Masters also, *verse 21, 22.* Either then they must not pray at all, which were to make them as profane as their infidel Masters; which to them would be matter of disdain or distaste: or they must content themselves alone with publike prayer in the Congregation of Christians, which none will affirm; or they must as holy Priests to God, offer (as the Priest did theirs) this holy incense to God, in a retired place, from view of others. Yea suppose forbidden by an Infidel Master to pray in secret, yet they are no more to forbear: then *Daniel*, King *Darius* his servant, did forbear it upon his Decree to inhibit the same, *Dan. 6.10.*

Bond or free  
so praying are  
rewarded.

5 Be that child bond or free who prayeth thus in secret, and not before others to his father, *hee will reward him openly*, *Matth. 6.6.*

Servants must  
sanctify their  
work by prayer

6 Godly servants are to sanctify their work by Prayer, *1 Tim. 4. 4.* Albeit *Abraham* had prayed for his servant, *Eliezers* good success in his business, about which he

he sent him, *Gen. 24. 7, 8.* yet *Eliezar* himself alone prayeth for good success that day, *vers. 12.*

7 The work which godly servants do sanctifie by prayer, though more short, is wont to speed best, as did that businets of *Eliezar*, so sanctified, *Gen. 24. 12.* as the issue declared. And surely godly Masters, which are to expresse special love to such servants, will not refuse to incourage them to take some seasonable time to pray thus, knowing how profitable such servants will bee to them, *Philem. 6. 11.* compared.

Some will object, *That they are apt to meet with temptations when alone.*

1 You may and will bee annoyed with temptations, when not conscionably imploied in your general or particular callings, as *David*, *2 Sam. 11. 2.* had he been praying alone, it had been well for him. And though *Joshuah* praying alone was assaulted by *Satan*, *Zach. 2. 1.* yet the issue was good, Christ the Angel took part with him, pleaded for him, *vers. 2.* put more honour upon him, *vers. 3. 4, 5.* Christ himself met with many temptations from *Satan*, when alone in the wilderness, but came out as a glorious Conqueror, and full of the Spirit, he went thither full of the Spirit, *Luke 4. 1.* and *verse 14.* hee came out full, he lost nothing thereby in the close, no more do his members proportionably.

2 It is Satans sight to present such scare-bags

Their work then speeds best.

Object. 3.

Tempted if alone.

Ans. 1.

No hurt by temptations if in Gods way.

Satan would that way debar us from it if he could.

bags in our way of drawing near to God in Prayer, but we must resist him in them, *Jam. 4.7,8.* It is a sluggards trick to fancy such Lions in the way to deter us from the same, *Prov. 26.13.*

Prayer prevents or removes temptations.

3 Prayer of it self is rather an occasion to prevent and remove, than to raise up temptations. *Matth. 26.41.* *Pray --- lest yee enter into temptation.* It helps us to put on and improve our spiritual Armor against them, *Ephes. 6.18.*

Object. 4.  
Inability to pray.

Ans. 1.  
If children, then crying to God.

Some will object *their want of ability to pray alone.*

1 If children of God, you have in you a childes spirit enabling and putting you upon praying to God, as to a Father, *Gal. 4.6.* The particular Daughters of *Jerusalem*, though not so fully acquainted with Christ, yet the Church looketh at them as able to pray in some measure, and therefore commendeth her case to their prayers, *Cant. 5.8.* *If yee finde my Beloved, tell him, (namely, in your prayers) that I am sicke of love.*

The Spirit will help our infirmities.

2 In case of great inabilities and infirmities, yet the Spirit will help the Saints to groan out their complaints to the Lord, in such sort as the Lord will accept, *Rom. 8.26.*

Exercise will increase abilities.

3 Let the weakest of the Saints, so far as their mindes and hearts are apprehensive of this or that failing, lust, defect, and spiritual ayle, or evil, put that into as good expression



pression as they can, in secret before the Lord, and though at first their tongue can but stammer out their souls cases, yet in a short time that tongue of the stammerer shall be able to speak plainly, *Isa. 32. 4.* At first you may bee timorous, but within a while you shall attain that *παρρησία*, liberty of speech, and spirit in prayer, *Ephes. 3. 12.* As young Scholers at first are timorous to speak without book, and apter to stumble and stammer in it, but in a little time by exercising themselves to it, wax more able and bold, exact and large therein. So it is here in the matter of praying (as I may say) without book. *As walking with wise men increaseth wisdom*, (*Prov. 13. 20.*) so walking with the wise God, in secret calling upon him, increaseth our holy skill, and abilities of talking with him in prayer.

Some will object (especially in this Country) want of conveniency of a place to bee retyred in solitary Prayer.

*Object. 5.*  
Inconveniency  
of place.

1 God required the Jewes of old to build their houses with battlements, which as they were places of safety, *Deut. 22. 8.* so secrecy fit for retiredness in Prayer; whence it was that *Peter* in that house at *Joppa*, getteth him in thither to pray alone, *Act. 10. 6. 9.* Such as are able, are supposed by Christ (*Matth. 6. 6.*) to have a convenient Closet, with a door to shut it for secrecy in Praier. And it would be a shame for  
Christians

*Ans. I.*

The able must  
get a fit Closet.



Christians to have private places for their very Swine to sleep, or their Cattle to feed in, free from annoyances of wind or weather; that they should not make some shift to get some retired place to seek the face of God therein.

2 If it were supposable (which hardly is) that Christians cannot have such a place within doors, at home or abroad, yet *Isaac* can get him into the field to pray, *Gen. 24. 63.* Christ can go apart into a Mountain to pray, *Luke 6. 12.* any solitary place in a Wilderness, will serve Christs turn to bee alone praying, *Luke 5. 16.* The Lord can, and sometimes doth make any solitary place when his Saints are praying, to bee to them a very corner of Heaven, as Jesus Christ when praying in the Mountain was transfigured, *Luke 9. 28, 29, 30.* Many a precious meeting, may, and doth the Lord sometimes give his poor Suppliants, when alone praying under some solitary Rock, or by some swamy side, or thicket, or the like.

Let us now apply what hath been said touching this Duty of Secret Prayer.

*Use I.*  
Neglect of  
Closet prayer,  
reproved.

1 Let this serve for Reproof to such Professors, which are shamefully to blame in the neglect of Closet Prayer by themselves alone. How many are so surcharged with worldly cares and employments, that they will scarce afford themselves time to attend upon either Church or Family prayer? but  
if

if they sometimes be praying there, yet seldom or never take time solemnly to seek the Lord alone. How do many here in *New England*, though able to do otherwise if but willing, build their houses so, as if they intended to shut Closet prayer out of doors? How do many look at Closet prayer, to be at the best but a Free-will-offering (as they term it) which they offer if they will, but look not at it as a duty, which they must attend upon all occasions? Surely such are little sensible of their heart-plagues, for then would they alone one by one make Prayers and Supplications, *1 King. 8. 38, 39*. How little do such love the Lord, that they are afraid to talk too much, or too secretly with him? Surely such have at most but some few drops of the promised Spirit of Supplication, for if they had plenty of that Spirit poured out upon them, they would be exercising the same apart, *Zach. 12. 10, 11, 12, 13*. No wonder if such are not led in a way of Supplication in secret, as well as otherwise, that they are ever and anon stumbling in matters of judgement or practise, *Jer. 31. 9*. Nor is it wonder that we have so many lukewarm Professors amongst us, if so few that make conscience of calling upon God, even in this sort also, *Hosea 7. 7, 8, 9*. Such as make not conscience of calling upon God publickly, privately, and secretly, either are, or will soon prove as a cake halfe baked. Such are not led by Rivers of water into

Such as neglect it are senseless of heart-plagues.

Have little love to God.

Have little of the spirit of prayer.

Are oft falling into sin.

Are lukewarm.

Are unfruitful

Have little  
love to others.

I ye open to  
desertion.

Imitate not  
best examples.

into a fruitful way, who are not led in a way of weeping and supplications, *Jerem. 31.9*. Such have little love to others, who are little with God apart in prayer. If we had more of *Cornelius* his spirit to be conscionably exercised in praying alone also, we should have more love to Professors. Full of prayers and Alms (fruits of Charity) was his commendation, *Act. 19.2.4*. And it is well if the spiritual *Chaldees*, the souls enemies, are not gotten into such mens hearts, as of old they did into the Temple; yea, and that God himself be not departed from such, as of old from the Temple, when this daily Sacrifice and Offering of holy prayer unto God ceaseth with them. Surely *Daniel* was not of these mens temper, who though he had such vast employments, as to take the accounts of the other Princes of the several Jurisdictions, and many other State affaires to dispatch, yet would not, no not for one day; no nor one time in the day, omit this his constant exercising himself in secret prayer; yea, when it cometh to a matter of hazard of his life, and all his worldly honours, yet to forbear this his course of daily seeking of God in secret prayer; hee had not such a thought, Why, I need not thus hazard my self, I may forbear praying thus to God in my chamber for a while: It is but a matter of my own liberty; I may pray thus, but I am not bound to pray thus by any command of God. No verily, he saw more in Gods command

mand then so, which was of more Sovereignty with him then any earthly Monarchs command. He will not onely deny to pray to the King as a God, which had been a sin of commission, but he will not forbear for the Months space, praying to the God of Heaven in his chamber, which had been a sin of omission. *Isaac*, who had such weighty matters, as the change of his condition, to have occasioned some omission of his retired converses with God, yet then also will not leave his usual work of going out into the field to pray, *Gen. 24*. Nor will *Jesus Christ*, whose example is a forcible Argument to urge our imitation of his holy practise, he will not omit this holy business of secret prayer, albeit he had many others of great moment to attend in their seasons; hee will rather borrow time from his natural rest in the night, if so fully imployed in the day (*Luke 21. 37.*) hee will get up the earlier in the morning before day, rather than want an opportunity for this holy exercise, *Mark. 1. 35*. yea, when the multitude came together to hear him, and be healed of him, hee will not omit this work, but withdraweth for that end, and they must stay the while, *Luke 5. 15, 16*. yea, his chiefeest Followers must be dismissed whilst hee attends this holy practise, *Matth. 14. 22, 23*. And to conclude this Use, It would be a shame that blind Papists, and superstitious Votaries should be more zealous in their way of secret

Are worse than  
Papists.



cret Devotions, than wee in our secret addresses in prayer to the Lord in the name of Christ.

Use 2.

Let all be exhorted to this duty.

Magistrates.

Let it then (in the second place) serve for Exhortation to the conscionable practise of this duty of secret Prayer. If such an one as *Cornelius*, who had so many Martial occasions to with-draw him, who also knew little of Jesus Christ as that Messiah promised, yet was so constant this way; wee that enjoy far more helps, and spiritual advantages, may much rather do it. Yea, say too many now adayes should Apostatize, as did such like in *Dauids* time (*Psal.* 55. 12, 13, 16.) yet let us bee the more resolute this way, as hee was *vers.* 17. *Evening, and morning, and at noon will I pray*: And truly, ever it were a time to bee much with God in prayer, together, and asunder, now is a time for it. All the Saints hands in a manner are up in all places, and doing exploits for God. And it were a shame if ours onely should bee down, especially when the Saints of God in other places think that we in special ply it hard in prayer together and asunder. Let Civil Rulers ply it thus, as that President *Daniel* did, as King *David* himself did (as we heard) *Psalms* 109 4. hee saith he is *Praying*, as being more in that than in any other work; but *I pray*, or *I will give my selfe to prayer*. *Constantine* the Great (as *Eusebius* telleth us) would have this as his Portraiture, a man on his knees praying.



praying, to shew that was his usual practise and posture. How oft was *Moses* the Magistrate with God alone in Prayer? Let Ministers, whose special Calling lyeth in this also, to give themselves to prayer (*Act. 6. 4.*) *Bee much in it.* How often is *Paul* described, as thus employed, *Rom. 1. 9. Ephes. 1. 15, 16. Phil. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 3. Epaphras* the *Colossian* Minister is commended for this also, *Collos. 4. 12. Eusebius* telleth us of *James* called *Justus*, that his knees were grown hard and brawnie with being so much and oft this way employed. And do not Ministers closet sins, as vanity of mind, vain glorious reasonings of spirit, listlessness sometimes to their holy work, call upon them for closet, study-prayers? Doth not their weighty closet work call for this? Is not Prayer (as once *Luther* said) the best Book in our study? Doth not Satan sometimes come into our studies to assault our work, as sometimes he did *Jehoiada* Priest in his? and had wee not then more need than others to bee found oft praying there? The Lord vouchsafes oftentimes to bee talking in friendly sort with us in our studies, and it were pittie and shame if hereby wee should not maintain holy conference with him. Who are more potent with God in publick prayer, than such Ministers as wrestle it out most with God in secret praier? The gracious language which there they learn from the Spirit of God, and

Ministers.

the choyce, lively, and spiritual Prayer-passages, and expressions, and pleas wherein the Lord breathes upon their hearts, when alone, are thole wherein hee is wont to breath upon the peoples hearts in publick prayer. Who more prevalent with God than *Paul* and *Peter*, this way exercised? we, as the friends of the Bridegroomie (as *Eliezar* was of old) speed the better in our work of gaining some spouse for Christ that day, for which we have been most earnest in secret prayer before hand. The defect hereof, too oft maketh our ministerial work so unsuccessetful; as it did that of the Disciples, assaying to cast out a Devil, without praying before hand for it, *Matth. 17. 21.* A Minister need not fear but hee shall preach well afterwards, if the Lord help him to pray well before hand: as Ministers have more advantage of privacy, so their people make account they have none: so this way: witness their frequent commending their cases to them, to spend time with them before the Lord in their prayers, and therefore let them be much with God in secret.

All sorts: For  
Christ brings  
us into his  
Chambers:

And let all our Brethren and Sisters, and every of them, make conscience also of this duty of secret prayer; the Lord Jesus bringeth us (my Brethren) into his Chambers, where he delighteth most to be, and rest, and shew himself and secrets to his Saints, *Cantic. 1. 4.* and shall not wee hereby

hereby bring him into our chambers also? *the Lord hideth us in the secret place of his presence*: the secret chambers of his providence and protection, are our chambers for our safety and honour, (*Psal. 31. 20. Esa. 26. 20.*) and shall not our chambers be his, for his use, that we there meet and talk with him in secret prayer, and hee with us by his gracious presence and answers?

Hideth us in  
his secret place

Each particular Saint of God hath his chamber, (as I may say) his mansion-place of glory, in which to praise God for ever, *Joh. 14. 2, 3.* Why shall not each Saint of God, of what condition soever, have here his retired oratory and place for secret praying unto God? each of them are by their calling, Gods hidden ones whilst here, (*Psalme 83. 3.*) and let them bee so in this respect also, by their secret repaires to the Lord in prayer. Each godly man in particular is set apart unto God, (*Psalme 4. 3.*) and why then not more apart to pray to him; we are his friends, (*James 2. 8. Iohn 15. 15, 16. Canticles 5. 1.*) and let us then be his friends in a corner. tell him our mindes, bee oft doing him this service of love in secret. We are his Spouses, (*Hos. 2. 19, 20.*) now as *Canticles 7. 10, 11, 12.* The Church would have Chrilt goe aside, as it were in private, and there she will give him her loves; so let us in secret give him this spouse-like love, fruits of our lips in secret, and there tell him all our hearts. The Spirit

Each Saint  
hath his cham-  
ber, or man-  
sion-house in  
Glory.

Each Saint  
Gods hidden  
one.  
Set apart for  
God.  
Gods friends

Spouse.

Wicked ones  
have and serve  
their Idols in  
secret.

which is in the Saints, is a free spirit, (*Psa.* 51. 12.) and truly there is the most free use and employment of that spirit in prayer, when sequestred as from all occasions, so from all other company. Friends are most free and bold, when alone; so wee with the Lord, when alone. A gracious person is never more himself as gracious, than when praying, *Psalms* 109. 4. *But I pray*, saith hee; and truly never more seen to bee such an one, than *when praying*, or given to prayer in secret. Hypocrites may, and will pray, and haply in private too, but wee must pray as most desiring privacy. When the Lord would demonstrate to *Ananias*, that *Paul* was converted; hee doth it by this argument, *for behold he prayeth*, *Act.* 19. 11. it was alone, in secret that he did thus, he must inquire him out, for he was got into some corner of the house. Let not wicked ones be more forward to set up an Idol in secret, or to set up a false Christ in the chambers, *Ezek.* 8. 8. *Matth.* 24. 26 than wee to honour the true God and Jesus Christ thus in secret. And that we may yet a little further press this so weighty a duty; consider that it is indeed our priviledge in many respects, ordered, by the Lord in much wisdom and faithfulness, for our good also, as well as his glory; that hee will have us thus to seek him by our selves alone in prayer. For, I Hee therein tendreth the very credit of his people. They need not uncover

uncover their spiritual nakednesse before any man whatsoever, nor all their personal plagues need bee unbared before men, it sufficeth that they have this priviledged precept to pray to their Fa her, who seeth in secret, and tell him all their hearts. In some cases of personal sins against brethren, personal confession of such sins is requisite; and sometimes in case of some oppressing burthen upon our hearts, wee are to go to some faithful Minister, or experienced Saint of God, and tell them our secret ayles; but in ordinary course it sufficeth that wee tell the Lord in secret, all our personal and particular failings and wants.

Best for opening all their secrets,

2. If solitary Praier were not Gods ordinance, what should Gods solitary ones do in sundry cases incident to them? But now *Jeremiah* in a solitary loanesome prison is encouraged, *Call upon mee, and I will answer thee*, Jer. 33. 13. Sometimes the Saints are like Pelicans and Owls in the desert. *Psa.* 102. 6. Well may they make their moans to the Lord, but are of all other respect destitute. Others would bee like other birds, fit to howt at them, and make a wonder of them; now welfare solitary praier. Sometimes the Lord worketh upon some one of the family, a sonne, or daughter, or servant, or the like; the rest remain opposite to all good, saying, *What profit should wee have by praying unto*

Best for our necessities.

K 3

Gad?



God? (as they say, *Iob* 21. 15.) nay, now will such say of the other person, wee shall have him a precise fool, a mopish sot: father now is against childe, as *Luk.* 12. 35. Now it is well that prayer in a corner, where none seeth, or heareth, but the Lord, is an acceptable service, and ordinance. The poor slave in the Infidels family, is now the Lords freeman for this business, *1 Cor.* 7. 21, 22. So the poor Christian wife with whom her Infidel Husband liked to dwell, though he yet like not her Religion, (*1 Cor.* 7. 13.) she may pray alone with acceptance. Bannished *Iohn* in *Patmos*, may thus bee in the spirit by himself alone, *Revel.* 1. 10. *Manasseh* in his setters, yet hath liberty all alone to make his Prayer to his God, *2 Chro.* 33. 11, 12, 13. If this had been no ordinance of God, to what purpose had *Dauids* couch-prayers been? which yet prevailed, *Psal.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. or how else had his cave-prayers ever come to be available? as *Psalms.* 142. title, with *vers.* 1, 2.

3 If this had not been an acceptable Ordinance, there had not been such honourable Records thereof kept by and with the Lord, as *2 Chro.* 33. 18, 19. this is singled out amongst all that *Manasseh* did in his loathsome state in captivity, as most notable and honourable, and therefore is twice repeated, *and his prayer, and his prayer.* So *Cornelius* his prayers are as memorials before the Lord, *Acts* 10. 2, 4.

Best for the  
Sants honour.

4 It is well for the Saints, that this is an Ordinance in point of honour ; that God herein, and hereby is wont to put upon them singly and severally, as that hereby they come to have Testimonials from the Lord himself of the good of Grace which is in them, and of their prevailing with him for desired mercies. Thus when *Jacob* is all alone praying, he hath a new name given him; he is told, *hee hath prevailed with God*, *Gen. 32. 27, 28.* Then is *Daniel* told, that he is *greatly beloved, and his prayers heard*; *Dan. 9. 20, 22.* Again, they have this honour put upon them to have choycest secrets revealed to them, as to Gods friends in a corner: those three Worthies severally praying, have this secret given unto them, *Daniel 2. 19, 20.* and *Jeremiah* calling upon God all alone in prison, hath great and wonderful things shewed him that he knew not of, *Ier. 33. 1, 2.* *Peter* when alone praying, hath the mystery of the bringing in of the Gentiles revealed to him, *Acts 10. 9, 10, 11.* yea, such in special shall have this honour of detaining of the Lord, when hee carrieth it as willing to bee gone. Let me goe (saith Christ to *Jacob* :) *I will not let thee go until thou bless me*: nor did hee, *Gen. 32. 26, 27, 28, 29.* Let me alone, saith God to *Moses*; but he suffers himself then, and afterwards to be stayed from going on his course of displeasure against the people, by *Moses* his wrestling with him (as we say) hand to hand *Ex. 32*

10, 11, 12, 13. *Deut.* 9. 13, 14, 18, 25, 26, 27, 28. compared. *I held him* (*Cant.* 3. 4.) *by the exercise of faith in prayer.* The Lord knoweth not how to leave a praying suppliant, or to proceed in a way of displeasure against him, and is not all this then well for the Saints, that each Saints prayer in secret is an ordinance of God, and a very acceptable service unto him?

**Cautions.**

1 In secret, as-  
fect secrecy.

Let us winde all up with a caution, or two, annexed.

1. Look that it bee not alone secret prayer, in respect of the place apart from others; but in respect of our desires, and indeavour as much as may bee of privacy. That as Christ saith of secret fasting and prayer in an extraordinary way, (*Matth.* 6. 15, 16, 17.) *Wash thy face, and anoint thee with oyle, that thou appear not to men to fast;* so avoid loudness of voice when alone, or if melted in secret, let it not bee perceived, if you can, that you have been weeping; yea, if you cannot go aside, unobserved of some in the house, let us even wish that we might so pray alone, that none might know how oft; or how long wee are therein; if any secret motion arise, to think of what others will think of us, let us abhor the thought of it, else, if in secret, our hearts desire others to take notice of us, that desire maketh it, before God, as if wee prayed in the street corner.

2 Avoid customari-  
ness.

2. That wee vanish not into customari-  
ness.

ness in praying in our closets, going aside thither to pray for fashions sake, living in good families, and seeing others go aside for that end, wee do it too, or wee have been trained up to it, and so wee will hold it on as a custome. Yea, lest wee go about it as a more formal task, which if we but perform, let it bee well, or ill, wee mind it not, regard it not; so wee do it, wee are satisfied; if wee do it not indeed, wee are troubled; but in all, not moved from any principle of love, and longing after communion with the Lord in it, or prevailing with God through grace by it, for pardon of this, or that sin wee groan under, or supply of this or that spiritual want, over which wee mourn. Verily such customariness will produce other evils, as listlessness to pray even when got into our closets; such will have so little of God in their customary seekings of him, that they will have little encouragement to set about seeking of him: It will also cause slightness in praying. The formalists praier is called vanity, *Job 35. v. 13.* And if slight in praying; usually as sleighty in praising. None saith (seriously at least,) *Where is hee that giveth us songs in the night? verse 10, 11, 12, 13.* compared. Such as are sleighty in setting upon the work of through repentance. Such as sleightly complain of their pining away in their sins, (*Ezek. 33. 10.*) and are therefore so roused up to turn unto the Lord,

Evils of customariness in it.  
Listlessness to prayer.

Slightness in prayer.

Praises,  
Exercises of  
repentance,  
Hearing of the  
word.

Seriousnesse in  
some sin.

as even too well content to dye in their sins, *vers. 11, 12. Turn you, turn you, why will you dye, &c?* yea, they are as sleighty in hearing the Word of God, as though but hearing only some Musical song, which as wee say goeth in at the one ear, and out at the other, *Ezek. 33. 30, 31, 32.* yea, commonly such are very serious in some way of sin against God, *Jer. 3. 4, 5. Wilt thou not from this time cry,* (namely in this sleighty fashion) *my Father? Behold thou hast done evil as thou couldst.* Yea, such are wont to be serious in discontented complaints of God in his dispensations of Providence; as that his way was not equal, when it is their own ways rather which are unequal; as those sleighty complainers of their sins, *Ezek. 33. 10.* are bold to charge God, *vers. 17. 20.* as if his ways were not equal.

## C H A P. VI.

### *Of Prayer of Intercession, and Imprecation.*

**H**AVING spoken of the sorts of prayer in general: we come to speak of the parts which are of special consideration in these sorts of prayer, especially of solemn and continued prayer, and letting pass those which



which respect our selves, we shal only single out those two respecting others, viz. *Prayer of Intercession and Imprecation.*

Concerning prayer of intercession, whereby upon all occasions we are bound to pray for others good, wee shall not mention the persons especially concerned in it; as Magistrates, Ministers, Parents, Masters, Husbands, and all other superiours, for their inferiours, as also their inferiours respectively for their superiours; or any other special relations, as of friends, kindred for their friends, and the like, of which Scripture instances are plentiful; but wee shall consider it generally, as that which respecteth all sorts of godly persons: nor shall wee spend time in urging Reasons and Motives from the honourableness of this holy service of love in it self; the advantagioufness of it to the persons themselves who so plead for others welfare every way, the suitability of this to that matchless pattern thereof in the Lord Jesus, and the mighty things which have been done for others thereby, and the like. But shortly come to lay down, First, some Rules to guide us in it. Secondly, some means to help us in it. Thirdly, some marks to discover our gracious speeding in it.

Touching the first thing propounded, observe we these Rules in it.

1 Attend the times, and observe them, when the Lord is in any more special manner

Rules about  
praying for others.

net

Mind when  
God is near us,  
and wee him,  
and then do it.

ner with us by his Spirit, and quickening  
presence; and when our hearts are got near  
to him, by special stirrings of faith and  
love, such times sometimes the Saints here  
met withal. They are as in Christs lap, upon  
*their Spouses knee, in their beloveds bosome,*  
Cantic. 8. 5. and would yet bee nearer to  
him. The Church is leaning upon her be-  
loved, yet saith, *set mee as a seal upon thine*  
*arm, and upon thy brest,* and then makes  
that gracious motion to her beloved, *verse*  
*8. Wee have a little Sister, and shee hath no*  
*brests, what shall wee do for her in the day*  
*shee shall bee spoken for?* As shee is ready to  
do her part, so shee would have him do his  
part for the others good; when the daugh-  
ters of Jerusalem find Christ, when he mee-  
teth them, then they must in their prayers  
tell him of the Churches sad case, *that shee is*  
*sick of love,* Cant. 5. 8. Moses will take  
the advantage of Gods being so near him,  
and speaking to his heart, *Exod. 33. 13, 14,*  
*15. 16.* to speak for his presence with the  
rest of Gods people. *If thy presence go not*  
*with [us,] carry us not hence.* And *Exodus*  
*34. 8, 9.* And Moses made haste and bowed  
himself to the earth, and worshiped, and  
said, *O Lord, I pray thee, if I have found fa-*  
*vour in thy sight, that the Lord would now go*  
*with us, and pardon our iniquity, and our*  
*sin, and take us for thine inheritance.* It were  
pity that the Saints would not improve their  
waiting months upon the King of Saints.

to move him as well for others, as for their own good. The King at *Esthers* banquet expecteth *Esthers* requests for her people: so doth the Lord at such time especially look that some should make intercession, *Isa.* 59. Hee expecteth that some should ask him of things to come, concerning his Sons, and his daughters. *Isa.* 45. and pray for the peace of *Jernsalem*, *Psal.* 122. 6.

2. When others are under any special desertions or temptations, or in any helpless, desolate, disconsolate conditions, as when the Lord is withdrawn from them, *My beloved had withdrawn himself*, *Cant.* 5. 6, 8. Tell him that I am sick of love. When under reproaches and indignities offered the Saints from others, which by their profession and place should do better offices for them, as when the Church is smitten and wounded by the watchmen, and her vail taken away by the keepers of the walls, then tell *My beloved I am sick of love* (saith she) When others are deeply sensible of their need of Christ, and nothing else will content them but Christ, then they are sick of love, then tell Christ of it, *ibid.* When the displeasure of God himself is breaking, or broken out against Gods own people; then if *Moses* have interest in God, he must down on his knees for *Israel*, *Exod.* 34. 13, 14, 15, &c. and *Exod.* 34. 8, 9. then *Aaron* must haste to offer incense, *Numb.* 16. Then *Job* must offer for his friends,

Pray for them, when deserted, tempted, or afflicted.

*Job*

*Job 42.8.* When enemies are ready to swallow up the Lords heritage, then *Isaiah* must lift up his prayer for the remnant of God. *Isa. 37. 4.* When persons of choicest use are in greatest hazards through the rage of persecutors, then prayer is made without ceasing for *Peter* by the godly, *Acts 12. 5.* When people want a fruitful Ministry, like breasts, pray for them especially, *Cant. 8. 8. Mat. 9. 36, 38.* Pray then that the Lord would thrust forth Labourers into his harvest, and in divers other like sad cases of the Saints.

3 Pray for them with fervency.

3 Be we serious and not slighty in pleading for others, *Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left, Isa. 37. Wrestle together in prayer for me, Rom. 15. 30.* if we should seeme therein to get a foyle, yet get up again and try it out a little more with God for them, especially in difficult cases. *Abraham* followeth *Christ* with prayer upon prayer, even for *Sodome*, *Gen. 18.* the end. *Isa. 62. 6, 7.* Give the Lord no rest until he make *Ierusalem* a praise in the earth.

4 Take the advantage of a may-be of mercy.

4 Take we advantage of the least may-be and possibility of speeding, to set us upon this service of love for others, in any case whatsoever, though not alwayes desired thereto by others; but especially when thereto moved by them, *Isa. 37. 4.* *Is may be the Lord hath heard Rabshceahs word;* and in ver. 5. *Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left, Exod. 32. 30.* *Moses* said unto the people, yet have committed a grie-

grievous sin, but now I will go up to the Lord, peradventure I may pacifie him, &c.

Touching the second, even helps to further us in this duty.

Helps to pray for others.

1 Brotherly-love.

1 Cherish we brotherly love, and kindness, and charity. Love the Church and people of God, his *Ierusalem*, and you will pray for them, *Psalms* 122. 6. Love your enemies, and you shall pray for them, *Mat.* 5. 44. The centurion will be suing to Christ for his Servant, who is very dear to him, *Luke* 7. 2. If wee love others, we will every way seek not our own things so much as theirs, *1 Cor.* 13. It is *Jonathan* who loveth *David*, will be a petitioner to his Father for him, *1 Samuel* 19. 4. 6. and 30. 30. And *Esther*, who loved her people, will not bee content to ask her own life, but theirs also of the King, *Esther* 4. 11. 16. and 5. 1, 2, 3. So it is in this case in our requests to the Lord for others, if wee love them. *Moses* will have no greatness of his, founded in his peoples ruine; nay hee refuseth an offer thereof, so hee may bespeak mercy for his people, *Exodus* 32. 10, 11. and *Numb.* 14. 11, 12. True suppliants can sometimes bee earnest for others, when more sparing in suing for themselves.

2 Bee as much acquainted with, and well informed in others estates as you can, especially espy, and inquire out all the good which is in them. The knowledge of others miseries, as the eye affecteth the heart, openeth

Knowledge of others conditions, especially of the good in them.



neth those fluces then, whereby it cometh to bee poured out for them; this brought good *Nehemiah* upon his knees, when hee had certain information of *Jerusalem's* calamities: *Hee sat down, and wept, and fasted, and prayed*, *Nehem. 1. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.* Hence the direction, *confesse your faults one to another, and pray one for another*, *Jam. 5. 14, 15, 16.* The best of us are much led by sense; others cases, of which wee have but some general informations, do not so affect, as those of whose particular cases wee have better knowledge: knowledge also, or hope at least of the good of grace which is in others, doth much quicken us to pray for them. From the day that *Paul* heard of the faith of the *Collossians* and *Ephesians*, how importunate is hee in prayer for them! *Col. 1. 3, 4. Ephes. 1. 15, 16.* The report of *Philemons's* faith and love, makes *Paul* echo forth the sound thereof in the ears of God by praying for him, *Philem. 4. 5.* And it would bee good to keep a fresh memorial of others graces, as *Paul* did of those in the *Thessalonians*, whence it was that he was so earnest for them in his praiers, *1 Thes. 1. 2, 3.*

3 Prize grace  
in others.

3. Prize wee grace in others, as well as in our selves, *2 Cor. 9. 14.* And by their prayer for you, which long after you, for the exceeding grace of God in you.

4 Put wee our  
selves in others  
stead.

4. Put wee our selves in others stead. So *Jesus Christ* teacheth us in the Lords praier, to bee our selves needing daily bread, and remission

remission of sins, and rescue from the evill of temptations if others bee so. So *Moses*, *Let the Lord go with [us] and [pardon us]* *Exod. 34. 8, 9.* So *Daniel* puts himself in the number and case of such and such suffering ones, *Dan. 9. 4, 5. &c.*

5 Look we maintain an holy life in prayers respecting our selves. When the root of a spirit of Prayer is kept fresh and springing, it will be sprouting forth into all the variety of the branches thereof, respecting others, as well as our selves. If that pipe be kept open, it will be conveying waters of Grace to others houses and hearts as well as our own. If the Spring Tide bee up, our neighbours creeks, as well as ours, will bee supplied with waters. The supplies of the oyl of Grace from the Lord of the whole earth, will be beneficial to the whole Candlestick, the Church, and the severall Bowls and Lamps of it, *Zach. 4. 2, 3. 11, 12, 13.* We cannot as members of this body sensibly think or speak for our selves, but more or less wee shall be mindfull of other parts and members of the body of Christ in special sort.

6 Put wee one another upon praying one for another. *Heb. 13. 18.* *Pray for us,* (saith the Apostle) Lay open your cases one to another, begging each others prayers. *Tell my beloved* (saith the Church) *that I am sick of love,* *Cant. 5. 8.* Many hands contribute this way, even to a poor decayed

Keep lively in  
praying for  
our selves.

6 Put we one  
another upon  
it.

I

Chri-

Christian, and will help him into a way of spiritual trading with God as formerly. As many Simples put together will make sovereign Physick to recover a sick man: so I may say of particular mens prayers meeting in one, farther other souls welfare and health. Some Favourites Prayers may help others who may bee under some displeasure of the Lord to come into renewed terms of favour with him, upon requests made for them. Therefore as *Mordecai* will set *Ester* on work to intercede for him with the King, and for his people; so should wee crave the prayers of such, who are upon better termes (possibly) with the Lord then we our selves are at present. God himself sends *Jobs* three friends under his present distastes (for not speaking so rightly of him as *Job* had done) unto *Job*, who though he had miscarried, yet had made his peace again with God, and hee must pray for them; *Job* 42.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8. *Job* must break the ice to clear their passage. Even the injurious *Gibeonites* must in case bless *Israel*, or else they are not to look to speed so well from the Lord, 2 *Sam.* 21.1,2,3,4. &c. God will have all the members of Christ to see the need and use of other members, even the meanest; as the Church of *Jerusalems* daughters to tell Christ in their prayers of her condition, *Cant.* 5.

Marks of prayers heard for others.

Touching the third thing, the Marks of our prayers speeding for others, and that the

the favours shewed to others are fruits of our prayers; are

1 When God stirreth up their hearts for whom wee pray, to be by faith perswaded that God will hear us for them, *Phil. 1. 19. For I know that it shall turne to my salvation, through your prayers, Philem. 22. For I trust that through your prayers I shall bee given to you.* When God doth thus send word before hand, and give notice to his Saints what hee means to do for them, at the request of such or such of their brethren, it is a pledge that the ensuing success was that way brought about.

1 Others saith, that we shall be heard for them.

2 When God in the conferring of such and such mercies upon others, doth secretly and strongly perswade them, that they are the fruit of the prayers of such and such of his servants for them, it is verily so indeed. As when *Paul* is perswaded that his liberty and life restored, and the gracious fruits thereof, that they were the fruits of the *Corinthians*, and others prayers; a gift bestowed by the means of many, *and you also helping by your prayers, 2 Cor. 1. 10, 11.* As when a King shall send word to some Subjects of his that hee hath done thus or thus for them, because of the request of such or such of his Courtiers: Or as a School-master shall tell his Scholars who begged their play-day: So here in such holy motions in others hearts, the Lord signifieth to them, that such or such a refreshment, in large-

2 Others saith, that we were heard for them

ment and succour in such or such temptations, are issues of the requests of such or such of his servants for them.

3 When they are the prayers of injured persons by them they pray for.

3 When God stirreth up injured persons to pray feelingly and fervently for such as have wronged them, as *Job* for his friends, *Job* 42.8,9. The Prayer of Christ for many of his Persecutors, *Father forgive them, &c.* *Luke* 23.34. It took well, witness that blessed change wrought in many of them soon after, *Acts* 2.36,37,38,39. This fruit of Divine love in the Saints, argueth a root of it in the Lord himself toward such persons, for whom they make such requests; and such strong living currents and rivers of kindnesse and compassions, argue an Ocean of the same bowels in God towards them; such love speeches being dictated by the special motions of Gods Spirit, are wont to be owned by the Lord.

4 When persons prayed for, are prayed for, as well by many others, as by us.

4 When some are stirred up to earnest Prayer for some one or more, for whom many others of the Saints, unspoken to, haply and unthought of, do in like sort intercede with God. When many help this way, toward the bestowing of one and the same gift, it seldome faileth, *2 Cor.* 1.11. *You also helping by your prayers, viz.* together with others in like sort stirred up, in other places to pray for the same gift: There is ever most of God in such unanimity and accord. When the Spirit of the Lord doth thus tune many hearts, as several Instruments



ments to answer one another, when the same Lesson of the Spirits setting and suggesting is played by divers Spiritual Harpers; this holy harmony of spirits, seeking to the Lord that hee would loose in heaven some poor sinning persons, formerly bound, but now repenting, this argueth the presence and acceptance of the Lord. *What ye loose on earth is loosed in Heaven*; that is, *If you shall agree (or symphonize) on earth, as touching any thing you shall aske, it shall bee done, &c. Mat. 18.18,19,20.*

5 When God carrieth out some of his servants in Prayers for others, very earnestly, resolutely, and constantly, as those who will have no nay. God assuredly, as a fruit of such holy importunity in Intercessions, maketh that *Jerusalem* a praise in the earth, *Isa. 62.6,7.* *Paul* who alwayes in every Prayer of his, is stirred up to mention the *Philippians*, *Phil. 1.4.* is confident that God will go on with his work in them, *vers. 6.* and hee thinketh it meet to bee so confident of it, because the Lord hath put them thus off into his heart in prayer for them, *vers. 7.* Such earnest incessant prayers of the Church for an imprisoned *Peter* are not denied, there being most of the Spirit in such Prayers.

5 If those prayers are importunate.

6 When God stirreth up the faith of such which pray and plead for others to listen, attend, wait, and expect; yea, and to bee perswaded of their answers, as the Psalmist

6 When such pray in faith for others.

in *Psal.* 85. 8. who expecteth peace as an answer of those praiers for others of the Saints, *I will hearken what God the Lord will say, for he will speak peace to his people,* (and his prayers for them are mentioned in the former verses.) When the Church in praying for the King is perswaded that they shall have the joy thereof, *Psal.* 20. 1, 2, 3, 4. and vers. 6. she concludeth the same from her faith, *That God will shew mercy to the King according to her desire,* vers. 6. Faith ever speedeth in its Suits, and in this our holy trading with God; its the Lords earnest penny, that he will give us sutable and seasonable returns.

7 When the mercies begged for them come in suddenly and strangely.

7 When mercies begged for others, are suddenly and strangely brought about upon our prayers; yea, and as suddenly brought to our knowledge. *Acts* 12. 5. 12. &c. *Peter* is sent in unto them, as set at liberty from his chains, whilst they are praying for him; wherein the providence of God would as it were speak to them thus, There is the Mercy, here is the man for whom you make so much ado; since you will needs have it so, and will have no nay, and the ears of the Lord are so filled with your cryes take it, and be thankful.

8 When as large in praises for mercies to them.

8 When we are in especial wise enlarged and quickned in thanksgiving for Gods mercies upon others. The many which gave thanks to God for his gift bestowed, were surely of the many by means of whose helping

ing prayings it was bestowed, 2 Cor. 1. 11. *Eli* prayed for *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 1. 17. worshippeth, being answered in prayer, vers. 28. The same Spirit moving to praise God, did assuredly stir up to prayer before. It is a sign of peculiar interests in those mercies of others, when the Spirit of God moveth us in such thankfull sort to owne the same.

Let us now speak a little more largely to the other branch, being somewhat more intricate, and not so often spoken to.

Prayer in way of Imprecation is that part of prayer wherein the Saints do not barely complaine of the indignities done by Gods, and his peoples enemies, against him and them, but crave Divine Justice against them.

Let us first clear this to be a Duty of the Saints, in case, to pray even against such as hate God and his people. *Judg.* 5. 23. *Curse ye Meros, &c.* *Dent.* 27. The Levites were to pray against divers kindes of sinners, and the people to joyn in those Imprecations by saying, *Amen*. The Scripture holds forth many examples of such Imprecations, as *Lament.* 3. 64, 65, 66. *Psal.* 144. 5, 6, 7, 8. and many other Scriptures.

We may, and in case, must pray against Gods and his peoples enemies.

Reasons enforcing the Saints to it, are,

L 4

1 Their

## Reasons

1 From our  
love to God.

1 Their love to God, out of love to whom they may, and must say as he did; *Do not I hate them that hate thee? &c. Psalm. 139. 20, 21, 22.* The converted Princes shall hate the Antichristian Harlot, *Revel. 17. 16.* and if the Saints may, and must hate the Enemies of God, they may pray against them.

2 From our  
respect to  
Christ and his  
Kingdom.

2 Their respect to Christ and his Kingdom, which wee are taught to pray that it may come as well in the confusion of some, as the conversion of other of his Enemies, *Psalm. 45. 5. Let thine arrows be sharp in the heart of the Kings enemies. whereby people fall under thee Psalm 99. 1. 2. O thou to whom vengeance belongeth shine forth, let the glorious beams of thy Sovereignty as a King, and equity as a Judge appear, lift up thy selfe, thou Judge of the earth, render a reward to the proud.*

3 From our  
respect to the  
Church.

3 Their respect to the Church and people of God, and their peace and good, whence those Imprecations, *Psalm. 137. 7. Remember, O Lord the children of Edom, &c. Psalm. 129. 5, 6, 7, 8. Let them all be confounded that hate Zion, &c.* But because our natures, as carnall, are principled rather with dispositions to curse, than to blesse; a carnal mans mouth is full of cursing, *Rom. 3. 14.* So that herein wee need not spurs, so much as bit and bridle to curb and guide us; And because even the dearest of the Saints have soulely miscarried this way, yea even when

when they least suspected the same, as *James* and *John* (*Luke 9.54,55.*) would have been requiring fire to come down from heaven upon those *Samaritans*, as *Elias* sometimes did, but were rebuked for it, though they seem to ask Christs counsel in it. *Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven?* To exalt Christs sovereign power in it, if that hee willed it, they in his name might command it, and to bee zealous of his honour injured by those *Samaritans*, yet checked as persons who knew not of what spirit they were of: Now considering such like things, wee had need to have aime given us, and to have the Marke described, at which wee must shoot.

Consider wee then, 1 In what way wee may not imprecate and pray against others. 2 In what way wee must pray against Gods Enemies. 3 Against what Enemies.

Cautions.  
Imprecations  
must not be.

1 Wee may not curse nor pray against the Righteous upon any pretence whatsoever, no not of sharp, harsh, high, or continued opposition against us. There was a sharp contention betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas*, but they prayed not against each other. *Abraham* and *Lot* ingaged in their Herdmens contentions, *Gen. 12. 7, 8.* yet *Abraham* prayeth for *Lot*, Chap. 18. 25. and 19. 29. compared. I heartily wish that all Gods servants, of either Congregational, or Presbyterial way, take heed of the breaking out

1 Against the  
Righteous.



out of any such fire as this is, which will bee found to bee wilde fire one day. As for the cursed crew of cursing Ranters, who curse those whom God hath blessed, yea (it may be) the blessed God himself also, our God will one day accomplish that dreadful word upon them (if they repent them not thoroughly of their Blasphemies) *I will curse them that curse thee*; and let none of them think that in cursing they bless them, for they are contraries, as the Lord there sheweth, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee*: Hee would not curse men for blessing his people, but bless them rather: they may as well imagine that God in cursing such, doth but bless them; and if they dare adventure to undergo Gods curse, and yet dream of his blessing, *Let the blinde lead the blinde.*

2 Causelesse.

2 Look that our curse against others bee not causeless, *Prov. 26. 7.* The curse that is causeless shal never come; as when *Jeremy* in a distemper cursed him that told his father first that a *Man-childe was born unto him*, *Jer. 20. 15, 16.* It is extream injustice and taking the name of God in vain (nor will hee hold such as do thus, guiltless) to call for vengeance against the guiltless, and to assay to make Divine Justice subservient to the unjust desires of the flesh. If a reviling *Racta* bee under the head of murder of another, *Matth. 5. 21, 22.* What is this? It is foulest impiety under a covert of piety, of prayer,

prayer, to seek to devour others.

3 Look wee, that though there bee some seeming cause, yet that wee bee not rash in imprecating, but very deliberate, consider throughly of our owne spirits therein, the want whereof was rebuked in *James* and *John*, though seeming to consult with Christ about it, *Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven, &c. but Jesus rebuked them, saying, You know not, &c. of what spirits yee are.* We are easily mistaken in our spirits at such a time, in such a work. In other cases not so intricate, wee understand not too often what is that which chiefly acteth, and moveth us therein; much more in this, we may soon miscarry here both in the persons against whom, and the things which, and the end for which we imprecate. If in other cases we should not be hasty with our mouths, or rash to utter a thing before God, *Eccles. 5.1,2.* much less should we be rash in our Imprecations.

3 Rash.

Luke 9.54.55.

4 Look that we imprecate not in our own persons barely. *Eccles. 7.22.* As when servants provoked will be cursing their Masters, our hearts and consciences will smite us for it, if thine heart knowes that thou thy self hast cursed others, *ibid.* this were to imitate Heathens in a way of revenge.

4 Not in personal cases merely.

5 Look that wee do not therein cut in sunder the bonds of special relations which the Lord hath laid upon us, as for children

5 Nor with breach of bonds of relations

children under any pretence whatsoever to curse their parents, *Prov. 20. 20. Who so curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.* Such wilde and strange fire never came down from Heaven, such a cursing tongue is set on fire of Hell.

6 Nor when pretending to blesse.

6 Look that wee doe not secretly imprecate against such as wee pretend to blesse. Some there are who *blesse with their mouth, but curse with their inward parts*, *Ps. 62. 4.* but such persons are rotten hearted, and neare ruine, *like a tottering wall*, verse 3. It is as monstrous that out of the *same mouth should proceed blessing and cursing*, as for a *fountain to send forth bitter, and yet sweet, or salt, and yet fresh waters.* *James 3. 10, 11, 12.* It is grosse Hypocrisie, and that wisdom which contriveth it, is carnal, sensual, and devellish, verse 15. The Devill himselfe will sometimes carry towards men, as it hee wished them well, and in heere curse them.

7 Nor abound-  
ding,

7 Look that wee doe not abound in imprecations, as that cursed cursing generation of Ranters (sprung up of late) little else to be heard, but, *Lord confound such and such, Lord cut them all off, God damne them body and soule, &c.* Prayers so continually besprinkled with Gall, argue a root of bitter Gall and Wormwood, *Deut. 29. Their Grapes are Grapes of Gall, their Clusters are bitter, and so their Vine is a Vine of Sodom,* *Deut.*

31, 32. Guile is under their tongue, which is full of cursing. Psam. 10. 7. They are Jewes, Professors of Religion in shew, but really carnal Gentiles, not sincerely righteous, whose mouths are full of cursing, constantly, and onely cursing, Rom. 3. 9, 10, 14. verses compared, such doe not experimentally know the Grace of Christ, and the blessing of Grace. verses 11, 14. Nor are sincere seekers of the Lord, *ibid.* But rather wander as persons dangerously deluded and misled, in by-ways leading to destruction, verse 12, 13, 14. And are at best unprofitable, and such as doe nothing formally good, *ibid.*

Lastly, Look that wee do not delight and glory in imprecations. The Prophet in Psal. 109. 17. speaks of one delighting in cursing, and by verse 8. compared with Act. 3. 20, Judas is pointed at therein, who it may seem thereby, was a man much given to cursing, and delighting much in imprecations, and himsele in the meane space a cursed Hypocrite, and Traytor to Jesus Christ.

3 Nor delight:  
full.

Caution 2. Now consider wee affirmatively in what way we may pray against others?

Ans. 1. Wee must bee more ready to blesse, and pray for others, than to curse, or pray against others. Blesse, or pray for them that persecute you, Rom. 12. 14. and Matth. 5. 44. compared: Yea, Blesse, saith the Lord, and curse not, *ibid.* The charge of blessing

We may pray  
against others  
lo.

1 Being more  
ready to blesse  
than curse.

blessing or praying for others, is reiterated, and a prohibition given to the other, shewing how ready and forward we should be to bless others, but bee very rare and cautelous in imprecating and praying against them; for the prohibition there is not taken absolutely and indefinitely in no case, and at no time, the Saints may, or ought to curse, or pray against others; the Scripture elsewhere (as wee have seen) allowing of it, in case, and injoyning of it.

2 Blessing  
long before  
we curse.

2 Wee must blesse long, before wee may dare to imprecate; in case they bee professed friends to the Lord. As *Jeremiah* did, who prayed long for those revoltors of his time, untill forbidden of God to pray any more for them, *Jer.* 14. 7, 11. *Pray not for this people*, yet vers. 19, 20, 21, 22. hee is at it again; *beseccing of God for his Names sake not to abhor them.* Chap. 11. 1. God telleth him; there is no good that way to bee done for them, though as mighty men in prayer, as *Moses* and *Samuel* stood before him; afterwards indeed; *Jeremy* once or twice prayeth against them, in *Jer.* 55. 10, 15, and 18: 21, 22. *Remember that I stood before thee for them; to turne away this wrath from them; yet Lord thou knowest all their counsel against mee, to slay mee, forgive not their iniquity, &c.* God is long before hee inflicts his curse; *My Spirit shall not alwayes strive with man* -- yet his dayes shall bee an hundred and twenty yeares. *Gen.* 6. 3. Wee may then  
bee



bee long before wee with the curse of God upon the ungodly. Jesus Christ was by, and heard his persecutors imprecating so against themselves, and children, saying, *His blood be upon us, and our children*, Matth. 27.25. And one would thinke hee might well say *Amen* thereto; nay, but hee would not, hee did not, for as in that, *Luke 22.34.* hee prayeth rather that God would take off that curse; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Imprecations had certainly miscarried, if they had been made, by any of the Saints against *Manasseh* or *Paul*, who yet went very far in rebellion and enmity against God.

3 Look that wee imprecate and pray that such or such calamities may light upon others, so as in reference to blessing of them: If the Lord please, *Psalme. 83.15, 16.* *So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm: fill their faces with shame, that they may seek thy Name, O Lord.* The Church shee anathematizeth a wicked person; but it is not for their destruction, but of their flesh in them, and that their soules might (if possible) bee saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. *1 Cor. 5.4.* So here,

4 Look that wee imprecate and pray rather against their sin and wickedness, than their persons against whom we pray, *2 Sam. 15.3.* *Turn this counsel of Achitophel into foolishness;* *Act. 4. 29.* *Lord, behold their threatenings.*

3 We imprecate rather with respect to blessing.

4 We pray rather against their sins then persons.

*threatnings. Psalm. 7. 9. Let the wickednesse of the wicked come to an end. It is the wickednesse, and the enmity of Gods wicked Enemies, which most properly striketh at God, which is most mischievous to the Church, and most hurtfull to themselves and others, wherefore spare no arrows against that; and as far as worldly greatnesse is an occasion and instrument of their wickednesse, we may pray against that, Psal. 58. 6. Break the great teeth of the young Lions.*

§ We imprecate conditionally.

5 Pray against the Enemies of God suppositively and conditionally; namely, if they persist in their enmity against God, that they bee implacable; that they be reprobates, persons devoted to ruine, and ripe for it. *David prayeth against the enraged Enemy, that God would judge them. Psal. 7. 6. but vers. 12. If he turn not, God will whet his sword, and the Lord himselte declaratively curseth the wicked by his Ministers, but yet with a tacit condition, if they repent not, and the like, Jer. 18. 7 8. & 36. 2, 3. And so are the Saints to wish that curse of God against them with the like tacit condition, if they repent not, and the like.*

¶ Imprecate indefinitely.

6 Pray against the Enemies of God indefinitely, and abstractively, not so much eying this or that person in particular, *Dent. 33. 11. Smite through the loynes of those that rise up against him, that they rise not againe. Moses did not eye one enemy of Levi more than another. So Numb. 10. 35. Let them*

*them that hate thee, fly before thee; the like, Psa. 68. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 16. 22. Let them that love not the Lord Jesus bee Anathema, Maranatha.* There is ever most of God, and least of self in such indefinite imprecations. And the Saints may in that way of imprecating bee both more free, and have more help to their faith in Gods Promises, wherein he ingageth himself in an indefinite way, to plague such and such a sort of desperate and ripened enemies, and the like, without particular reference to this or that person in particular.

7 Look that as wee propound for our end in such imprecations, the glory of God, and the Churches good, (and as *Pauls* respect to the glory of God in his word, makes him wish them accursed *that preach another Gospel, Gal. 1. 8.* And his respect to the Churches good and peace, maketh him wish them cut off *who trouble them, Gal. 5.*) So for the manner of imprecating. we doe it in faith, Psalm 36. 11, 12. *Let not the foot of pride come against me. There are they fallen,* and he by faith seeth them fallen against whom he prayed, Psalm 10. 15. *Break thou the arme of the wicked, ver. 15. The heathen are perished out of his land.* Yea, that it bee with holy grief of heart, that wee have any cause to imprecate against any enemies of God, As *Matthew 18. 31. When the fellow servants saw what was done* (by that cruel and merciless wretch against one of

7 We imprecate with faith and that with respect to Gods glory and the Churches good

M

their

their fellows, ) they were sorry, and came and told the Lord. As Christ the Judge pronounceth that sentence against those his enemies, with expressions of much bowels -- he beheld Jerusalem, and wept over it --- and said --- they shall not leave thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the day of thy visitation, Luke 19. 41, 42, 43, 44. So should the Saints, which as Witnesses, or Assessors, either give in Evidences or Verdicts upon the testimonies of their acts of enmity against God; and his Church; they should do it with grief.

We must pray  
against trea-  
cherous ene-  
mies.

Touching the third thing propounded; we say, wee may and must pray against treacherous enemies, which should have been friends: as those of *Meros*, which should have helped the Lord against the mighty, were cursed, Judg. 5. 23. Psalm 69. 20. I looked for some to take pittie, but there was none, &c. vers. 22. Let their table become a snare.

2 Sly enemies.

2 Against sly undermining enemies, such as pretending to pittie and help, will hurt the people of God, Psalm 55. 15. Let death seize upon them: his words were softer than oyl, yet were they drawn swords. Such as can use all fraudulent expressions to insinuate to murder souls, Psalm. 10. 7. and vers. 8. They lurk and lye in wait to take all advantages to murder the innocent; yea their very souls ( if it were possible ) as well as their bodies, by wily tricks to draw them

them to sin against their Consciences, *ver. 9.* *They would bee drawing them into their net.* *Yea, vers. 10.* *Hee croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall.* And *vers. 12,* *Arise, O Lord, O God, lift up thy hand,* and *vers. 15.* *Break thou the arm of the wicked.* Such enemies who professing the true Religion, yet against their own light will bee plotting all the ways they can against the Saints, and to reproach, and to disgrace the ways of God, *Jer. 18. 18, 19, 21.* these are very like the Devil, transforming himself into an Angel of Light, but against his light, using all his wiles to insnare souls, and bring them to like perdition with himself. These do the more mischief to the Church and people of God, and possibly cause many truly godly ones, through their wiles, to go halting and bleeding to their graves.

3 Against mocking, scoffing, and insulting enemies; who like *Tobiah* and *Sabbathat*, do deride and jeer at the gracious practices of the Saints, as they did at that good work of theirs, in building *Jerusalem's* walls, *Nehem. 4. 2, 3.* But *verse 4, 5.* *Hear O God, for we are despised, and turn their reproach upon their own heads,* *Psalms 69. 10.* *When I wept and fasted, that was to me a reproach:* or *ver. 11.* *I became a Proverb to them.* And *vers. 26.* *They talk to the grief of them whom thou hast wounded,* *verse 27.* *Add iniquity to their iniquity, &c.* Such as are

3 Mocking  
insulting  
enemies.



ready to gnash their very teeth at the righteous, and to make themselves merry at any evil befalling them *Psalm 35. 16. Hypocritical mockers in Feasts, who gnash their teeth upon me, they open their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it, vers. 26. Let them bee ashamed and brought to confusion together, that rejoyce at my hurt.* Such are old standers in the ways of sin, and have long walked in the counsels of the ungodly, and now taking up their rest (as it were) in the way of scorning at God and good, *Psal. 1. 1.* These have most Venome in them that can laughingly smile on the Saints, when yet they had rather be gnashing their teeth at them, and so are riper for Gods curse, as even ready to glory in any wicked pranks which are played against the Saints.

4 Apostatized enemies.

4 Against Apostatized enemies; As an *Achitophel, a Judas, Psal. 55. 12, 13, 14, 15. An Alexander, 2 Tim. 4. 4. Alexander hath done me much hurt, the Lord reward him according to his deeds.* Such do much hurt indeed: they know the ways of the Saints: they are most imbittered against them. Like Christians turning Turks, proselited Pharisaical persons; more hellish in their malice and fury against the godly, than Turks, or Pharisees themselves, *Matth. 23. 15.* the sweetest wine turning the sharpest vinegar-like spirits against the Saints.

5 Enemies against God in Saints persons.

5. Against such as apparently oppose rather

ther God in their persons, then the persons themselves; opposing persons every way amiable in their eyes, for Parts, Parentage, good behaviour and repute, and only because godly, and so hating them without any (personal) cause, *Psal. 69. 4. only for Gods sake they reproach them, ver. 7. Because they pray and fast, that is to their reproach, ver. 10. Let the table of such become a snare, &c. ver. 22. Psalm 35. 7. Without cause (on my part) they have hid for me their net, &c. Therefore let their way be death. And ver. 20. They devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.* Persons that meddle not with others, or others matters, but have their conversations in Heaven, they themselves cannot charge them to be turbulent, but they are pious, they are conscientious, that is enough against them in such mens eyes, and yea where-ever, or in whomsoever such Persons see the Image of God, they doe like their Father the Devil, maligne it. Yea, though they gaine neither credit, nor profit by maligning such persons, as the Devil himself doth not, but are rather losers by it, yet they are well appayed if they can but wreak their despiht upon the Saints: let the ways of such be slippery, and the Angel of the Lord persecute them, *Psal. 35. 6, 7. &c.*

6 Against such enemies, who are so great, that they are even past the reach (in a manner) of Humane Justice; none other

6 Enemies  
past the reach  
of mans justice.

left (in a manner) to break their teeth, but God only. Such as say, wee will speak, and do thus and thus with them, and let us see the proudest Hee of them all, which dare contradict or oppose us, *Our tongues are our own, who is Lord over us?* As for the Saints, they make a puffle at them (such poor snakes as they are:) and some vilest persons (haply) being exalted (to the highest place of rule) such wicked enemies walk on every side, without (curb or controule:) Now it is high time for the poor and needy to cry against them, and God will arise at their cry, *Psalm 2. 3. 12. 4. 8. with 1. 5. verses compared.* In this case Christ maketh it the Saints duty to cry night and day for vengeance against such enemies. And God at length wil hear them, *Luke 18. 1, 2, 3, 7, 8.* Bloudy-minded *Joab* being too mighty to bee reached by King *Dauids* Justice, is prayed against, *2 Sam. 3. 29. Let this blood rest on the head of Joab, and vers. 39. I am this day weak, though anoynted King, and these men the sons of Zer-viah be too hard for me, The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.*

7 Enemies  
with whom  
Divine justice  
hath begun.

7 Against the enemies of God, which Divine Justice hath already found out, and begun to seize upon. If the Fire of God hath begun to kindle on them, and in them, we may blow it up by this holy breath, *Psal. 21. 9. &c. and vers. 13. compared.* If God sheweth that it is his will to cut down such ripen-

ripened stalks, we may help onward to their cutting down; if hee hath begun to wound such mad Dogs, such Wolves, such Serpents, we may help to kill them outright. If hee hath routed such *Midianites*, our prayers must help for the chase of them. When persecuting *Babylon* is once begun to be battered at, and closely besieged through Gods sin-revenging hand, *Then the inhabitants of Zion shall say, the violence done to me, and to my flesh, be upon Babylon; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say,* Jer. 51, 31. 32, 33. with 34, 35.

Lastly against general enemies, such as Antichrist, the Saints may and must all and every one of them, muster up all their spiritual forces against such an enemy. To conclude.

8 General enemies.

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Ans. I answer, 1. When God bringeth strange judgements upon persons prayed against. As *Hozekiah*, no extraordinary inspired prayer, hee prayeth against blaspheming *Sennacherib*, 2 King. 19. 5. 16, &c. and vers. 20. God heard his prayer, which appeared, ver. 35. by the strange band of God against him, and his Army, of 185000. who are cut off by an unusual stroke or plague of the Angel, and he himself (in an unheard of manner)

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*Ans.*

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a Speedy and sudden judgments come on them.

is killed by his own sons, whilst hee is worshipping in the house of his God, vers. 37.

2 When God bringeth upon such enemies speedy and untimely Deaths, and not long after imprecations of the Saints made against them; as that night after *Hezekiah* had so prayed, the Angel wrought that unheard of slaughter of the *Assyrians*, and soon after that parricide is committed upon *Sennacherib* himself. Doubtless the Saints which made such earnest request for *Peter*, did not forget *Herod* that bloody-man to intreat God to convert him, or else to cut him off, if ripe for it; and *Acts* 12. 5. 23. you see it is not long after that in that unwonted way, hee cometh to his end by the stroak of an Angel, when the very next day *Arim* dyeth by voyding his bowels as hee went to ease himself, it is a sure token that the prayer of that godly Bishop of *Alexandria* which he made against him the night before, did speed him. *Theodoret. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 1. Cap. 4.* when within five or six days after that fasting and prayer of the *Jews*, wicked *Haman* is unexpectedly brought to his end; surely God hath respect to his peoples requests in their mournings, and this their enemy came to fall before them, *Hester* 4. & 7. compared, according as the very night after *Hesters* feast, that unexpected way was made by God in the Kings heart for *Hamans* fall, *Chap. 6.* when *Achitophel* within a day or  
two

two after, *David* had prayed, --- *Lord turn the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness*, 2 *Sam.* 15. 31. compared with chap. 7. 1. 23. cometh to his end; it evidenceth the same to be an issue of *Dauids* imprecation. It is a sign that God heard that cry of *Moses* against the *Egyptians*, when that very day the Lord in a wonderful manner overthroweth them, *Exodus* 14. 13, 15. 33. compared. So when *Iehoshaphat* and his people solemnly and humbly request the Lord to judge those inhumane, ingratul enemies of theirs, 2 *Chron.* 20: 2, 3, 4, 5; 10, 12, 13. and the very morrow after, God doth in an unwonted manner bring ruine upon those enemies, *verse* 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25. compared, all may safely conclude, that those prayers sped them.

3 When the manner of the ends which God bringeth upon such enemies against which his pray, is reproachfull and shamefull; as when a wicked *Haman*, which a little before was the greatest in the Kingdome, cometh to bee hanged upon a Gallows, *Esther* 7. 9, 10. When the great Oracle of the people, and Counsellour of State, *Achitophel* cometh to so shameful an end, as to dye by an Halter, yea to hang himself. When that Deputy King or Governour *Herod*, hee cometh to so base an end, as to be eaten of basest Vermine, of Lice; so when wretched *Arius* cometh to so base an end, it

3 Reproachful ends befall them.

ar-

argueth that some godly *Alexander* hath told his errand to the Lord.

4 When the very same Judgements prayed for, follow.

4 When the Judgements God bringeth upon his enemies, are the very same which his people desired against them in their prayers. God doth not indeed always hear his people in the very particular, but in something equivalent; yet sometimes he doth, and when he doth so, it the rather argueth the same to be an answer of prayer. As when not alone a Prophet extraordinarily inspired, prayeth against *Judas*, in another enemy like him; and the things desired are inflicted, as *Psalms* 109. and *Acts* 12. 18, 19, 20. compared. But *Iotham* an ordinary man, he prayeth that Fire may come from *Abimelech*, and devour the men of *Sechem*; and again, that Fire may come from the men of *Sechem*, and devour *Abimelech*, and the issue presently afterwards answereth the same, for both were instruments of each others ruine; it is a sign that *Iothams* prayer sped them both, *Judg.* 9. ver. 56, 57. compared.

5 They perish without being desired.

5 If when persons prayed against are swept away, without any desiring even of their associates to the contrary, even they pity them not, there is none, no not of their companions in evil, to shew them mercy; all blessing from any hand (almost) is farre from them, *Psal.* 109. 12. 17. The very wicked which drew them, which counselled them to such treacherous enemy-acts against

against God and Christ, cast them off without pity; as the Priests and Scribes did cursed *Judas*, in his saddest out-cries and troubles.--- *What is that to us?* (they will not own him, nor his acknowledgement) *look thou to it, Matth. 27. 4.* Nay, such enemies prayed against, if the prayers bee effectual will (like those *Ammonites*) help forwards one anothers ruines, *2 Chro. 20. 10. 11, 12.* with *ver. 22, &c.* such bloudy *Shechemites*, so prayed against, will help forward murtherous *Abimelechs* death and misery, as he did theirs, *Judges 9. 56, 57.*

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PART





## PART II.

1 Theſſ. 5. 17.

*Pray without ceaſing.*

### CHAP. I.

*Touching the modification of the exerciſe  
of Prayer: and therein of Impor-  
tunity in Prayer.*



Having diſpatched the Diſcourſe about the nature, ſorts, and parts of Prayer; we come to conſider the of modification of the exerciſe of Prayer, injoynd and implied in the word, ἀδιαλείπτως, which implyeth praying *importunely*, *opportunely*, and *indefinitely*. Some Interpreters make account, that *Paul* hath reference herein unto that ſpeech

speech of Christ, Luk. 18. 1. *that men ought to pray always, and not to faint*; namely, through spiritlessness, sluggishness, or slightness, so here, *pray*, ἀδιαλείπτως, without giving out, giving over, leaving off, or intermitting any space of time, which must needs imply importunate praying; as that of the Widows plying that unjust Judge with earnest Suits for Justice, notwithstanding any seeming discouragements or denials. And indeed such as pray importunately, earnestly, and fervently, when they doe pray, they in Gods intent and account, doe *pray continually, or without ceasing*.

Now for our better handling this Duty of praying importunately, consider wee,  
 1. Wherein importunity of Prayer consisteth? 2. The Qualifications of it. 3. The Reasons intorcing it. 4. Some Helps furthering it. 5. Some Marks discovering that importunity of Prayer which the Lord meaneth.

Touching the first Quere, Wherein importunity of Prayer consisteth? I answer, It consisteth,

1 In the extensiveness and intensiveness of the mind and heart, and of each praying Grace of a godly Suppliant in his prayer. Our new Translation rendreth that in Acts 12. 5. by a like phrase as this in the Text, *Prayer was made* [without ceasing.] but the word there in the Greek is ἐκτενως, then was Prayer made which was stretched out upon the

Importunity in Prayer consisteth

1. In the utmost improvement of mind and heart, and the gifts and graces of the Spirit therein, in prayer.

the Tenters; not so much, namely, in the length and largeness of the intercessions as such as put up the same, as in respect of the thoughts, holy affections, and exercise of the graces of the spirits of those godly Suppliants in their prayer. So in *Acts 26.* Prayer was one special peece of that service intended in that there mentioned, *One twelve Tribes instantly serving God day and night.* The words are ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ, in a stretched out manner serving God, *Psal. 119.* *I cryed with my whole heart. Davids* whole heart acted in that prayer with all earnestness; his prayer was the common cry of all that was within him; his desire, Love, Hope, and all the graces of his spirit in his heart put forth themselves in his prayer. See *Rom. 12. 12.* *Continuing instant in prayer* προσευξάμενοι, *continuing with all your might in prayer.* The acceptable prayer is ἀνεῳγμένη ἐν ἐργασίᾳ, an *inwrought prayer.* A prayer wherein all the active hands within the suppliant are set on work, according as there it is said of him, *Colos. 4. 12.* *Always labouring fervently in prayer for you,* ἀγωνιζόμενοι, *wrestling for you in prayers.* A fervent Suppliant doth Wrestler-like, bend and writhe, and strain every joynt of the new man in their souls; yea, of their whole mind and heart, so farre as sanctified, that they may take all helps and advantages of the Lord to prevaile with him in prayer. All our lines must meet in this center of Prayer: our whole

whole man must wait upon this as the creature of the Holy Ghost : as it will share in this blessing, so it must act in begging it ; and then it will put on the garment of Praises also for it. Like as before, the whole man went as it were in mourning weeds in the want of that blessing : so the mercy will be sweetest to the whole man when it is thus holily imployed in the begging of it ; or if the mercy bee delayed, yet it can the more quietly sit down in the want of it, when it hath used Gods means for it. A gracious Christian that prayeth much, can want much, he hath that inward peace that guards his heart and mind from discontent, *Phil. 4. 6, 7. Make your request known to God, and the peace of God shall keep your hearts.*

2 Importunity in Prayer, consisteth in a frequent renewing of our suits, when wee are at this holy work, early and late ; the Psalmist was at it early, when hee said, Psalm 88. 13. *My prayer shall prevent thee,* and 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed, &c.* He was a good husband, and earnest in this holy work, who was at it so early ; a lively Christian will be up in his spirit, and hard at this work, when other lazie and drowsie Professors are not stirring this way. And verily hee had need bee up betimes, who preventeth the Lord with his Prayer, whose use it is before wee call, to answer us, *Isa. 65. 24.*

2 In frequent renewing of our suits.

*Psal.*

*Pfal.* 21. 3. The importunate suppliant also will be late at it, come for bread at midnight, when he might have it inwardly suggested to him, that hee cometh unseasonably, as that Parable holdeth forth, *Luke* 11. 5, 8. Hee will pray with the first and with the last too, hee will pray again and again. *For this I besought the Lord thrice,* 2 *Corint.* 12, 7, 8. His fresh suits freshen up the supplants praying graces; put a new gloss upon his faith, love, fear, zeal, holy desires, and the like. Sometimes the heart is more praying ripe then at other times; importunity trieth conclusions, seeth how our hearts Prayer-pulses beat at all times; the heart is sometimes more full of holy motions and workings, much more resolute, more fixed upon God and good, much more tender and sensible. Importunity taketh all advantages of the heart of a Christian; an importunate suppliant is wont to be always taking the scales and ballances into his hand, and in his thoughts putteth in the mercies hee needeth and longeth for, in the one Scale: and all his Prayers, Pleas and Tears for the same in the other. And perceiving the mercies to weigh down all his prayers, hee then layeth in more prayers and sighs, and yet alas, they are not weight, which makes him still to bee laying weight after weight, prayer upon prayer all his days. Prayer is the Soules messenger, which it speedeth to Heaven, there to relate in the ears of our God



God and King, the various cases which do concern it ; and as good speeding messengers, are the most serious, and the most serious messengers speed best, so it is in the case of Prayer ; yea, as messengers are sent again and again, till their Errand bee fully told, and their business dispatched, or sufficient order taken for it, so it is here : Prayer after prayer, is sent up to Heaven, until either the Lord do what is desired, or that which is equivalent to it ; as in *Pauls* case, *2 Corint. 12. 7.* he said unto me. *My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made known in weakness.* An importunate Suppliant hath the art of praying, and so hath his divers Spiritual topick places, (as I may call them) whence hee frameth variety of holy arguments and pleas in prayer, which is an holy reasoning with God (as it is called) hee hath a great deal of Spiritual eloquence, and holy rhetorick, so that hee is feldome nonplust in prayer, but with sweet and apt variety of supplications, is again and again, pressing upon the Lord for mercy : and when ordinary prayer seemeth not to prevail, importunity in prayer will bee expressing it self in an extraordinary way, fasting shall bee joyned to crying mightily, as *Jonas 3. 6.* and if our prayers alone prevail not, it will make us goe another way to work with God, even to set others on work to seek God with us and for us, *Canticles 3. 6. I sought him, but found him not,*

3 An holy impatience of delay or denial of an answer.

vers. 8. *If you find my beloved, tell him I am sick of love.*

3 It consisteth in a holy impatience of delay, or of denial of our holy requests; it maketh a gracious Suppliant to stand (as we say) upon thorns: *the captive exile hasteth to be delivered*, Isa. 51. 14. The Church is even sick of love for want of the desired presence of Jesus Christ, *Cant. 5. 8. Heare me speedily* (saith David) *my spirits say, least I be like to one of those that go down to the pit*, Psa. 147. 7. it is even death to such to be delayed, much more to be denied, hence those frequent ingeminations, *How long Lord, how long?* Psal. 13. every day, week, or moneth, is as seven to importunity: love in the soul to the Lord, his favours and fellowship, keepeth due and true account how long he hath held us off, and therefore calleth upon the soul, Go again to him, renew thy suits, speak, why dost not thou speak for a speedy answer? and faith whispers the soul in the ear, be not put off, the Lord hath that by him for which thou comest; it is not for his honour to bid thee goe and come again to morrow, when hee hath that pardon, and peace, and grace by him for which thou comest: yea, Sathan and unbelieve will bee charging such present pay of spiritual debts, or else to prison; and therefore feares and jealousies are raised by them both in the Saints, and many times will poss and haste the soul upon desires of speedy

dy resolutions and answers from the Lord, what he meaneth to doe for them at these dead lists.

4 It consisteth in a strong resisting of discouraging suggestions whencesoever arising, tending to beat the soul off from prayer, *If the answer from within bee, trouble me not, I am in bed, Luk. 11. 7, 8.* yet the Suit is continued, and for importunities sake the Friend ariseth, and supplieth with Bread: If the Angel say to importunate wrestling Jacob, *Let me goe: say, I will not let thee go, till thou blest me, (saith hee) Gen. 32. 26, 27, 28.* hee will hold his hold whosoever saith no, *Exod. 32. 11, 12, 13.* *Let me alone* saith hee to Moses, (or leave off thy prayer, as the Chaldee paraphrase readeth it) but the event shewed hee would not, hee did not let him alone, *Psal. 83, 4.* Though God carry it towards his people, sometimes as angry, yet they pray; why art thou angry at the prayer of thy People? *Lamentations 3.* when his prayer is shut out; yet he knocketh, *Psalms 61. 1, 2.* *From the ends of the earth will i cry to thee, when my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher then I:* let his distances bee never so great, hee is resolved to cry after the Lord, & if he get but his head never so little above water, the Lord shal hear of him; *Psa'm 69. 1, 3.* One would think his discouragements such, as hee were past crying any more, *the waters entred into his soul, in*

4 In a resolute breaking through discouragements in prayer.

*deep waters the streams running over him: he sticketh fast in the mire where is no standing, (he is at the very bottome, and there fast in the mire) he is weary of crying; yet* vers. 6. 13. *But Lord, I make my prayer to thee: and as he recovers breath, so breathes out fresh supplications to the Lord; if men or Devils would bee forbidding to pray, as the multitude sometimes did the poor blinde man, to cry after Jesus; yet as he, so an importunate suppliant will cry so much the more, Jesus thou Son of David have mercy on me, Mark 10. 47, 48. When distrust and distempers would be pulling such a suppliant by the sleeves, as he is going to the throne of Grace, and say, What, thou go thither? alas poor tattered Creature, wilt thou goe thus in thy raggs? Hath the Lord nothing else to doe but to wait upon such as thou art? Doest thou poor Prodigal think that hee will bee spoken with by such an one as thou art? Go pay thy debts first to Divine Justice, thou knowest what an one thou art, and hast been. It is for such as are so fruitful, so faithful, so zealous, so mortified, so Self-denying, so sincere, so serviceable to God and others; such as have kept so close to God, that have not runne into such and such Sins against Light, such as can confidently stay upon God; and not for thee who hast failed in all these, to draw near to him: yea, but strength and importunity in prayer will gather strength*

by these pressings and oppositions, these gusts will but kindle the fire of holy desires, and make them flame out the more in prayer; and conclude, that it concerneth the Soul the more to begge and seek for mercy. Sometimes the guilt of some special Sin would stop the Souls mouth this way; but that also maketh it to roare out its complaints the more, and press the harder for pardon. Sometimes the World in the occasions of it would with-draw the Soul to speak a few words to it of concernment; but importunity packeth that away with indignation. Importunate *David* will chide out all manner of disquieting suggestions, *Why art thou disquieted within mee, O my soul?* Psal. 42. 5. and break through an army of discouragements to speak to the Lord: if he must swim for it through a tempestuous sea of difficulties, he is at a point for that, he will make his prayer to the God of his life, verse 7. 8. In this holy building-work, opposition maketh not serious builders lay by their Trowel, but take their sword rather in the other hand, ready to resist such as oppose it; such holy beggers have no other trade to live upon, but such begging, it is even death to them to leave it.

5 It consisteth in a patient bearing and over-looking adverse occurrences in our seeking of the Lord, *Genesis 32. 25. The Angel touched the hollow of Jacobs thigh,*

5 In submissive bearing cross and rejection in prayer.



and it was out of joynt as he wrestled with him, but yet hee muttered not; hee mindeth his work: and *verse 26. I will not let thee go except thou bless me:* let him criples him and bruise him if he please, but bless him hee must ere they part. The importunate Canaanitish Woman doth not regard, or any ways stomach the taunt of Christ, (if it may be so called) in his calling her Dogge: *It is not meet to take Childrens bread, and cast it to doggs,* but shee owneth the worst name he can give her, as her due, *Truth Lord, saith she, &c. Matthew 15. 26, 27.* These people of Christ will bee seeking of him, *Cant. 5. 6. I sought him, but could not finde him, I called upon him, but he gave me no answer;* yea, they bear it quietly: yea, *but the watchmen, and those upon the walls abuse his people, verse 7.* They put up that also, but follow their suit for the recovering of Christs favour towards them, *vers. 8. If you finde my Beloved, tell him (in your prayers) that I am sick of love.* Such beggers winch not much for the barking, yea or for some snaps of Dog-like enemies to prayer, nor care such beggers what they are secretly termed, the worst name is welcome, so that they may have but the almes of mercy for which they come. They meet with many a wrinch, and many a crush, in pressing through crowds of discontentments, with their petitions to their Kings gracious Throne; but earnestness of their desires, makes

makes them quietly to bear all. In those soul wooings of Christ, such like discouragements are all nothing. if at last they may but win Christ, and gain true Spiritual conjugal fellowship with him: if they finde such a pearl, they weigh not any coil they are at in seeking it. If they may but gain the passages of the straight Gate to life, they can very well bear the dry blows they meet with, in fighting to enter in, as the force of that phrase, (*Luk. 13. 22.*) ἀγωνίζεσθε, holdeth forth *fighting*; as those of old in the *Grecian* exercises, some whereof were with fists, and batts. Brave spirits are up in the soul, when a spirit of importunity in prayer is stirring, and they will make suppliants bear any thing: so much also the force of the word προσκαρτερέω, (used both, *Col. 4. 21.* and *Rom. 12. 11.* For continuing instant in prayer,) holdeth forth; continuing therein with much patient bearing of incumbrances or molestations.

6 It consisteth lastly, in being in a holy wise, unsatisfied with smaller measures of prayer-blessings, pressing still on for more. Importunate *Abraham* hath his additional requests to the former, when they are granted, *Genesis 18. 17, 20. 30.* So *Moses*, when heard for *Israels* Pardon, so farre forth, *Exod. 32. 10. 11, 12, 13.* yet he wants, and must have the Lords gracious presence along with him; and then *Exod. 33. 12. 13. 17.* when that is granted, yet hee wanteth a further light of Gods glory, *v. 18.* And when

In holy insatiableness with mercies received.

he hath got that, yet *chap. 34. 8, 9.* he hath a further request for *Israel* againe, *verse 8, 9.* *Gideon* hath scarce ever done asking one signe and token of Gods gracious presence with him, after another granted him, *Judg. 6. 17, 18, 37, 38, 39.* compared. Those earnestnes make them press harder for the receipt of farther and larger sums of Grace; those gracious recoveries makes them to renew their suits and pleas; those tastes do but whet their appetites after more of such Spiritual chear; such first fruits make them long the more, for gathering in more of that blessed harvest; now and then a view and kiss of their beloved at their request, makes them more enamoured with love-desires after more.

Importunity in  
prayer must  
not be;  
1 Unseasonable.

Now of the second thing propounded. What manner of importunity is required? To which I answer, 1. Negatively. 2. Affirmatively. Negatively also two ways. 1 Look that it bee not unseasonable importunity but a seeking of Christ early, in the day time of Grace, but not in the evening, the close and ending of that day, *Prov. 1. 28. Thou shalt seek mee early, and not finde me*, when the door of Grace is shut, to cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, it is in vain *Luke 13. 25.* when men have wearied out the Lord with knocking at their hearts, and with calls, and they answer not him, *they shall (cry) saith the Lord, but I will not hear.*

2 Look

2 Look that it be not an inordinate importunity, an importunity of some lusts, like *Rachels* wrestling (in prayer also) with great wrestling for a Son. 2 Inordinate, or for a lust.

Quest. *How may Inordinacy of affection or lust, be discerned to be the spring, and give rise to importunity in prayer?* Quest.

1 *Ans.* When importunity in prayer for mercies which we want, is uttered with undervaluing of the blessings we already have, or with discontentment at them, *Numbers 11. 4.* You fell a lusting, and wept, saying, *Who will give us flesh?* and verse 6. *Wee can see nothing but this Man.* Like Children, that whilst crying for an Apple from their Fathers hand, will fling away the Cake that is in their own, and so get a whipping rather than a Pippin (as we say) so such get a lashing, rather than their longing, which argueth an inordinacy in such children.

1 *Ans.*

Marks of earnest prayer when from our lust.

1 Undervaluing of mercies received.

2. When such importunity in seeking such or such things from God, is accompanied with a prising of a very bad estate, in the enjoyment of the things we ask: as *wee remember*, say they, *the flesh we did eat in Egypt*, *Numb. 11. 4, 5.* they are so eager for flesh, that *Egypt* it self, where they had such flesh, hath now an honourable memorial with them, and they could even be glad of *Egypt* again upon condition they had but flesh enough as formerly: A place of Bondage, a place where Sacrificing to the Lord

2 Valuing of things desired even with a bad estate.

Lord was an abomination to the *Egyptians*, would be a welcome place, with that desired flesh they crave. *Luke 15. 12. The younger said, Father, give me the portion of goods which falleth to me : hee will have it though hee wants his Fathers presence, and the communion of his Family, and bee left to himself to shift for a living. The Israelites will have a King, though they are told from God, that they will be in a farre worse condition under their tyrannous usages, than ever they were under the government hee appointed over them, even under their Judges, 1 Sam. 11. 11. to the 18. And verie 18. And you shall cry out in that day, because of your King which you shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day. verie 19. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voyce of Samucl, and they said, nay, but wee will have a King over us. Like some young men, that against all their fathers whollome admonitions will needs have such an one for their Wife, and night and day sollicite their father to let them have her ; though told that they will undoe themselves by it.*

3 Asking things unsutable to our condition.

3 When wee ask things of God, that are unsutable for our condition : as for the younger Son to ask his Father to have all at his own dispose, when no way fit to manage it, *Luke 15. 12, 13. So for Israel in a Wilderness to desire Quails, a meat altogether unsutable for their place, and estate ; So*  
for



for James and John, to desire that one might sit at his right hand, and the other at his left hand in the Kingdome of heaven. Mar. 10. 35. 37. before they are fitted to suffer with Christ, or for him; to bee riding on Horseback ere they are able to goe on foot.

4 When wee are rashly importunate, as James and John were, Mark 10. 36. *For ask you know not what*: they considered not, understood not what they asked: or as in that request for fire to come down from heaven, to consume those Samaritanes, Luk. 9. 54. Christ told them, you know not what spirits you are of: they considered not from what spirit they were moved in that request. When we wait not for Gods counsel, advise not with the Lord about what we are to ask; or not seasonably, before our hearts are grown inordinate with their desires, Psal. 106. 13, 14. *They waited not for his counsel, they lusted in the Wilderness*: when desires prevent, or out-run deliberate judgement, they are not right; or when Judgement the Mistris, must wait upon these her maids, there is disorder: When your princely minde must go on foot, whilst servantly affections ride on Horseback, there is confusion; when understanding must only dance after affections pipes, there must needs be great miscarrying.

5 When wee are not willing to waite the Lords leasure for the effecting of what wee ask of him; but will be asking of him

4 Rashness in asking.

5 Hastiness for getting things desired.

in

in wayes full of hazard, or with means of our own devising to attain our desires: As *Rachel*, who wrestled in prayer for a childe, *Gen.* 30.8. but whilst delayed gave her maid to *Jacob* to attain her desire of a childe; or like *David*, desiring the waters of *Beth-lehem*, which could not bee had, without the life-blood of such as fetched it, *2 Sam.* 23. 15, 16, 17. Like feverish persons, flying out of their beds for the drinke they ask: The *Israelites* desire to go up to *Canaan* then when God said nay, was a lust, *Numb.* 14. 40, 41, 44. There were lusts in that Kings extraordinary seeking of God for supplies of bread, by fasting and prayer, *2 Kings* 6.30. That in delayes of supply, lets drive at the Lord himself, verse 33. *Behold, this evill is of the Lord; what should I wait on the Lord any longer.* *Isa.* 58.3. Wherefore have we afflicted our soule, and thou takest no knowledge: Those breathings that are so short winded, they are not Divine inspirings.

6 Inequality in desires.

6 When wee keep not due proportions in our desires, being more importunate in corporal matters, and those of lesse consequence than in those soul matters of greatest concernment: Like those in *Hosea* 7. 14. *Who can howle upon their beds for corne and wine;* and yet without heart to seek reconciliation with God, verse 10, 11. Luke-warme at the best in spiritual matters; *a cake halfe baked*, verse 8. Like foolish children

dren, hardly ever speaking of choice matters, and yet ever and anon filling the house with cries for Rattles and Bauls.

7 When wee flye in the face of this, or that Creature, lay causelesse blame upon such or such persons, or things, if not answered of God, in things that wee crave of him: Thus *Rachel* wrestled with God for a childe, but whilst delayed, quarrels with *Jacob*, *Give me children, or else I dye*, Gen. 30. 1, 2, 8, compared. Like distemperd patients, angry with their attendants, because they may not have such, or such things, albeit forbidden by their Physitian: Or like children falling out with the Executors of their Fathers Will, because they do not at their times, in their wayes, and proportions, pay them in what they desire.

7 Quarrelling with instruments.

8 When our desires in prayer tend to a lust, and the service of it, they spring from a lust; And if lust bee last in execution of our desire, it is the end of them, and so the first in Intention. Our prayers are in their *Genesis*, as they are in their *Analysis*: When their resolution and dissolution is into Inordinacies, their beginnings were assuredly some inordinacy. Such prayers and desires as have earth and flesh for their Center, were assuredly earthly and carnal in their principles: Such as their *Omega* is, such was their *Alpha*. The Prodigal who spent

8 Asking for a lust.

James 3. 3.

spent what hee asked of his Father upon Harlots, surely had some inordinate lust, which set him on work to ask the same of his Father, *Luke 15. 12, 13.* for this it is that the Apostle *James* condemneth these Professors: *Tee ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.*

9 A blast upon the thing desired.

9 When the fruition of the things so earnestly desired, proveth afterwards some way burdensome to us, *Genesis 19. 20.* How earnest is Lot for Zoar, *Is it not a little one? and my soul shall live:* but verse the 36. He is weary of Zoar: Lot went up from Zoar: thus the *Ijraelites* Quiales over earnestly asked, become loathsome to them. *Numb. 11. 18. 20.* So did they at length cry out as much upon a King, as ever they did cry out for one, *1 Samuel 1. 8. 18.* This passing from one extreame to another, argueth inordinacy in the heart. Now wee come more briefly to answer affirmatively.

Importunity in prayer must be,  
1 From faith.

1 Their look that your importunity in prayer be caused and guided by faith: so it was with the importunate Petitioner, *Mat. 15. 25. 28.* compared. Hee saith not, *oh woman,* great is thy importunity, and yet it was such; but, *great is thy faith;* faith doth ballast the heart aright in prayer, and keeps the swift sayling desires thereof in their due course.

2 With meekness and submission.

2 Look that it bee with filial meekness, submission: Christ offered up prayers with strong

strong cries, and tears, *Heb. 5. 7.* but annexeth, *not my will, but thine bee done,* *Matthew 26. 39. 42.* and *Luke 22. 42. 44.* compared.

3 Look it be done with futable earnestness, and seriousness in holy indeavours, in the use of lawfull means to attaine our spiritual desires, *Canticles 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.*

3 With like earnestness in use of means.

Touching the third thing, the Reasons calling for importunity in prayer: though we might name many; as the Lords importunity in calling upon us; the fiery fervent nature of the Spirit of God in us; the importunity of the wicked in their desires; the prevailing force of such holy importunity with the Lord. Yet we shall insist upon this one Reason, taken from the evil of carelesness, remissness, or slightness in prayer, which is cross to importunity in the same, which may suffice to awaken us all to the contrary duty of importunity in prayer. Let us only hint some particulars of the evils both of sin and sorrow which attend such slightness and remissness in prayer. Consider wee first of the evils of sin in such slightness in prayer.

Evils of sin in slightness in prayer.

1 A slighty prayer is a blind sacrifice: the mind of such a one that so prayeth, is not wont to consider, or observe what he doth therein. He that is careless of the manner of his approach to God, looketh not to his feet, considers not that he doth evil, *Eccle. 5. 1.*

1 Inconsiderateness in prayer.

2 It



2 Incompleat-  
ness in prayer.

2 It is a lame sacrifice ; it is not a compleat prayer. Like the Sacrifices of those careless slighty Jewish Priests of old, *Mal.* 1. 8. such a ones affections to God and good are corrupted. Such an ones expressions in prayer, are very unfit and unsutable oftentimes unto what he is speaking of. Prayer in such an ones mouth, is as a *parable in a fools mouth*, which in expression is very unequal, *Prov.* 26. 7. The Prayer-expressions of a drowsie, slighty spirited Professor, are like the speeches of one half asleep, half awake, full of impertinencies. The minde also of such a one is cripled, haltereth : witness the many distractions which constantly accompany such an ones prayer. The minde of such being not serious in prayer, and taken up in talking with God, will easily admit speech with other objects, which will bee calling the minde forth to mental discourses about them whilst praying. As it is in seeking of something which wee have lost, if wee minde it not seriously, wee shall have trifles enough in view to draw our eyes to them ; so is it in slighty seeking to God in prayer.

3 Instability in  
prayer.

3 Carelesness and slightiness in prayer, breedeth and feedeth inconstancy, and instability in prayer. Any, yea sometimes no occasion shall cause a slighty Professor to neglect his praying. Any pretence that will but seemingly serve to stop Conscience its mouth, or any discouragement

ragement will put him by praying it is verified in such an one, *Jeb 27.10. Will hee alwayes call upon God?* (that is) hee will not do it on constantly. Their goodnes in seeking God in prayer also, *is but as the early dew which goeth away, Hosea 5. last, and 6. 1, 2, 3, 4,* compared. Nor will it be only an occasional omission sometimes of Prayer, but an habited instableness in Prayer, now off, now on; now having a minde; and now no minde to pray; untill at length such a one waxeth weary of prayer, which did not call upon God, to wit, seriously, *Isaiah 43. 22. Thou hast not called upon me,* (namely importunately) *but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.* As it is with the sluggard, *Pro. 6. 10. Yet a little slumber, and yet a little sleep;* and as one sleep and slumber stealeth upon another, so one sleighty prayer begetteth another, at least a disposition thereunto; and one omission of prayer occasioneth another, though it may be, an awakened conscience would faine have it otherwise; or as it is with a sleighty workman, if he doe but now and then forbear working, labour groweth tedious to him, or at least hee cannot hold out to any constancy in working. The like befaller him that is sleighty in praying, hee cannot bee constant in praying: Such an one will rather run any hazards, to shak and shift for comfort otherwise, than bee constant in labouring in Prayer for it.

O

4 Sleight-

4 Slightnesse in prayer, it rather strengthens then weakens the sinnes wee pray against. When Professours grow remisse in Prayer, then corruptions presently gather head, and get the better; if *Moses* his hands grow heavy and remisse in prayer, flying, yea and wounded *Amalekites* will rally, and give a fiercer and more victorious charge. *Exodus* 17. 11. Whilest a Christian Souldier handleth this weapon of Prayer carelessly, hee leaveth an open marke for an Enemy and lust to foyle and wound him, if not mortally and irrecoverably. Should a Christian Traveller, though like another Traveller, with his Pistols in his Holsters, and his Sword by his side, bee well weaponed, yet if carelessse, and as good as a sleep by the way side, hee is a fit prey to any lust to spoyle and rob him of his treasure; or if suddenly awakened in conscience, to see his danger, yet hee is but as one suddenly awakened, in a kinde of amazement, and hardly in case to resist and fight against any such robber. Yea sleightnesse in Prayer layes a Christian open to all manner of temptations. It even tempts that Arch-robber and Murderer of soules, the Devil, to bee making a booty of such sleightry Professours. *Mark*. 14. 37, 38. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.* The Disciples carelessnesse of Prayer made the more ready way to Satan to tempt them to forsake their Master. And it was an ominous presage to *Peter* in special, of his

his sad fall soon after, *Simon, sleepest thou? Watch and pray lest yee enter into temptation.*

Supineness and sleightnesse in prayer is an in-let to delusive fancies and conceits. The sleightest Christians in holy performances are most haunted with groundles and vanishing toys and hopes, as is evident in hypocrites, who are habituated in such a sleigh-ty way of prayer, and other religious exercises, *Joh. 8. 11, 12, 13.* As it is with other persons who are betwixt sleeping and waking, they are subject to dreams. so is it with such like Christians.

5 It is an in-let to delusions

6 Such sleightnesse in prayer, is an in-let and sad fore-runner of Apostacy, if not seasonably redressed. The Professours in *Jo-  
sias* time that so soon turned back from God, were such as did not seek God, namely to any purpose, but at most, formally and care-lessly. *Zeph. 1.* The foolish Virgines, who for fashion and forme sake, goe out to meet Christ in his Ordinances, making it their great care to get so much oyle of grace, as would make them shine in religious exer-cises, their oyle at length failed them, and their Profession and religious performan-ces ended in a snuffe, and in smoak, *Matth. 25. 8.*

6 It brings in Apostacy.

Christians come not from one extreame of rash and hypocritical zeal and fervency, to the other of utter contempt, and neglect of God and good, but by this midling

temper of sleightness, from hot, they come to bee quite cold by this lukewarmness: When Christians are once beginning to take from the heighth and steep of fervency, they then haste downward apace, and if the Lord prevent not, they stay not till they fatally fall into the bottomeless pit. When Christians grow indifferent in their desires of grace, they grow as indifferent in their endeavours after it; and when once indifferent whether they do work for God or no, they are fittest to bee hired to doe some worse work. When Christians through carelesse in driving this holy trade of prayer, do not thrive, but go down the wind amain, it is twenty to one but they will bee taking up some other trade; it may be of covetous persons, it may bee of time-servers, it may bee of drunkards, it may bee of adulterers, it may be of hereticks, or opinionists, or the like.

Evilsof sorrow  
accompanying  
sleightness in  
Prayer.

Consider we now of some evils of punishments and sorrow attending this; for this being in Gods account the guise of deceivers, *That when we have a male in our owne flock*, as sometimes the Lord spake, *Mal. 1.8.14* --- We have serious spirits in other matters of the world, or the like, Yet offer such an accursed thing, as carelesse and sleighty prayers; a curse of God is wont to attend it, God is wont to blast such in their spirits and gifts; so that their very gift of prayer is by degrees taken away from them; there

A blast upon  
the gifts.



there is a secret moth that eateth out the strength and beauty of it; and it is too often found, that whilst such are sleightly hape-thing and trifling about the greater matters of their souls, the Lord leaveth offering his rich mercies to them, and whilst they are making some complemental suits to Christ, hee at length will be wooed no more by them, and that sad curse of God threatened against them in *Jer. 44. 26.* *And the Lord will bee no more named by any mouth of the men of Judah,* cometh to bee fulfilled in such loose-hearted Professors. Prayer is cast out of their Families and Closets, as some, refuse service, as is to bee seen in these later dayes in too too many; or it by some awakening afflictions sent upon them, they come to be roused; yet it is too often their just doom to bee earnest indeed, but without any regard thereunto by the Lord. *They shall cry, but I will not hear. Zeph. 7. 11. Isa. 65. 13, 14.* But at best any degree of such a sleightly spirit in prayer, will become very grievous to us, if truly gracious: Whence that way of complaint, *Isa. 64. 7.* *There is none that calleth upon God, no not one, that stirreth up himselfe to take hold of God.* It is as grievous to such souls to have their spiritual joynts either bound or benumbed, as it is in a like case to men when their body hath its numb palsie; when in prayer a gracious heart is ever reaching out to take an approaching mercy, and then

Divine forsakings,

Saddest heart-  
g icts.

through a little incogitancy and remifnesse, the mercy is let slip, and the advantage at that time lost, it must needs bee grievous to the godly.

To the fourth Query.

**Quest. 4.**

**Quest.** *What means we should use to be importunate in Prayer?*

**Ans.**

Helps to importunity in prayer.

1 Distinct knowledge of the Lord.

I answer, get the more abundant knowledge of God, and of our selves, but especially acquaint our selves with Gods friendly and mercitull disposition towards us. *Luke 11. 7, 8, 5.* verles compared, *Hee who was importunate for bread, knew hee was at a friends door:* Like the *Syrians* hearing that the *Kings of Israel* were mercifull Kings, this quickned them up to that earnestnesse in seeking their favour, *1 King. 20. 31.* It will make a beggar earnest for an almes, when he knoweth where a bountifull person liveth, who is not wont to send any beggar away empty.

2 Lively hope of mercy.

2 Cherish we hope of the Lords mercy to us. *Jonah 3.* *Let them cry mightily to the Lord, vers 9.* *Who can tell if God will turn and repent?* The possibility that the Lord was within hearing, and might open to the *Ninivites*, made them knock so hard at his door of Grace.

3 Sense of our own helplesnesse.

3 See wee bee sensible of our utter destitutenesse of what we are to aske of God, and our shiftlesnesse to get it any other where or way. *Luk 11. 3, 6.* *Lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine is come, and I have nothing*

to set before him. Luke 15. 17, 18, 19. *I perish for hunger, I will arise, and go to my father, and say, Make me as one of thy hired servants.* Psal. 143. 4. *My heart is desolate within me,* vers. 6. *My soul thirsteth after thee.* When all other means and doors fail such spirituall beggars, and that one onely door of Grace is left for their reliefe, or else they must famish, how earnestly will it cause them to knock there? Jer. 3. 21. *A voice of weeping and supplication was heard,* vers. 23. *Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.*

4 Look that wee account highly of the mercies wee aske in Prayer. Prov. 2. 3. *If thou cryest after knowledge, and listest up thy voyce after understanding,* vers. 4. *If thou searchest for her as silver, and searchest for her as for hidden treasure.* The Church was sick of love, Cant. 5. 8. and useth all means to finde him; and no wonder, *her beloved was the chiefeest of ten thousand to her,* vers. 10.

4 High esteem of what is desired in prayer.

5 Take we holy advantages of the gales and movings of the spirit in prayer, and of Christs approaches to us: opportunity helps importunity in prayer, Mat. 20. 30. *And behold two blinde men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cryed out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Sonne of David.* And vers. 32. *And Jesus stood still and called them, and said, what will you that I doe unto you?* vers. 33. *they say to*

5 Opportunity of prayer.

him, Lord, that our eyes may bee opened. When Christ by his Spirit calleth us to him, putteth us upon asking, and when hee stands still waiting to bee gracious to us, now let him not goe till hee blesse us. When beggars come whilst a bountiful person is giving out his dole to the poor, or in dinner time when victuall is stirring, they will not away without something. So if we perceive the Lord to bee on the giving hand, put in hard for a blessing.

6 Improve experiences.

6 Improve wee former advantages gotten of God in, and by prayer. *I will cry to God most high, unto God who performs all things for me.* When wee see crying will do, it will put us on not to spare for crying. Now in this holy search after experimental knowlege of Gods grace we now and then light upon a smaller vein of such treasure, wee will not spare any pains in digging; when in our daily wooing of Christ in prayer wee meet now and then with a smile and kiss, and love-token, it will make us follow our suit close.

7 Make prayer our only business.

7 Goe wee about prayer as our only business, which then wee have to doe, engaging our selves to attend it. Saints are spiritual solicitors by their calling as Saints. That which made *Abraham* so urgent in his request, *Gen. 18. 27.* is this, *Behold now I have taken upon mee to speak to the Lord.*

8 Chide wee our selves sadly, and bee  
wee

wee seriously abased for any sleightinesse, at any time in prayer, as the Prophet complaining thereof, Isa. 64. *We have not called upon thy name, nor stirred up our selves to take hold of thee; And Isa. 63. 17. Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?*

As Elisha was wroth with Joash for smiting but thrice, and then staying, 2 King. 13. 18. 19. saying, *Thou shouldest now have smitten five or six times; or as they did chide sleeping Jonah, when hee should have been praying, Jonah Chap. 1. 6. Awakethou sleeper, and call upon thy God.* So chide wee our sleighty spirits to awaken unto prayer.

9 Set wee the examples of the most importunate Suppliants of God before our eyes James 5. 17. *Elias prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not; a very dullard will pluck up his feet when he seeth how nimble his leaders are.*

Lastly, Take heed of all such things as are enemies and impediments to Importunity in prayer. Such as are inordinate desires after other things; we cannot to any purpose follow severall suits at once, in severall Courts; we cannot ply the worlds court and Gods too. The messengers are sent out another way which should importune heaven, and they cannot be here and there too; whilst our winged desires are hastening after other things and booties, we are slowest in moving heaven-ward with wings as Angels.

2 Immo-

8 Chide our selves out of sleightiness in prayer.

9 Set before us the best examples of Importunity in prayer.

Lets to Importunity in prayer.

1 Inordinate desires after other things.



- 1 Too much eagernesse upon lawfull things or occasions.
- 2 Immoderate intentnesse even upon our lawfull occasions; when our spirits are even rivited to our occasions, they will not be easily got free for prayer, they must be ever filed off again, no ordinary pulling at them will do: when we are too too busie all the day long in speech with such occasions, they will bee calling even in prayer for a word with us.
- 3 A wandering minde before.
- 3 Inconsiderate roving of minde in the interims between our praying season; when wee let our fleet thoughts flye hither and thither without restraint, they will not bee so easily lured by us, and come at our call, to become fixed in prayer.
- 4 Distraction in prayer.
- 4 Admission of wandering thoughts in prayer, and too easie yeeldings to sleightinesse therein; they grow unmannerly bold, when in the least entertained.
- 5 Resting in grace received.
- 5 Resting in Graces and Comforts received in and by prayer; wee are sure to become remisse in praying the next time, if wee feed our thoughts too much upon what wee got the last time wee prayed, or if sleighty once in prayer, because secretly thinking to make amends the next time, wee shall be then also the more sleighty.
- 6 Diffidence.
- 6 Misgiving Apprehensions touching God and his Grace: That thought (*Job 21.15.*) *What profit should we have, if we pray to him?* maketh them carelesse of coming near the Lord. A petitioner must needs be heart-

heartlesse in his suit, if hee thinke that the King is wroth with him. And a beggar hath no mind to stand begging at a known Churles door.

Quest. To the last Query, touching the marks of right and acceptable importunity in prayer. Quest. 5.

Ans. I answer, wee may discerne our importunity in prayer to bee acceptable, when our importunity is the importunity of a Suppliant, of a beggar in spirit; when it is attended with much self-abasement, as the importunate Canaanite, who looked upon her selfe as a dog, *Matth. 15. 26, 27. Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eate of the crummes under the table. Importunate Abraham looketh at himselfe as dust and ashes, Genesis 18. 27 29.*

Ans. Marks of acceptable importunity. Self-abasement in prayer.

2 Ans. When our hearts in prayer are well warmed, fire hot, then the end of fervent prayer is attained; when our hearts wax warm by it, and the means is acceptably used, then Gods ends in the use thereof are attained.

2 Ans. Holy warmth in prayer.

3 When wee are in speciall wise attent, as to the worke we are in hand with, so to the successe thereof; as that woman that besought Christ in an acceptable way of importunity: You may see, shee lay at catch, for shee picketh out something for her holy advantage, even out of that word which Christ let fall in way of Answer, *Matth. 15.*

3 Holy waiting for an answer.

*It is not meet to take childrens bread, and give*

give it to dogs : Truth Lord , yet the dogs eat  
of the crumbs falling from their masters tables :  
that prayer was full of holy pleas , and  
are importunate prayers. Psalm. 58. 1, 2, 3, 4,  
5, 6, 7. And the Prophet beleeveth it was  
acceptable, vers. 8. *He will speak peace unto  
this people :* but withall , hee was in a lifting  
posture after his answer, *I will hear what God  
the Lord will speak.*

4 Hearty  
prayes after-  
ward.

4 When wee are as earnest and serious  
in returning praises for mercies received and  
begged , as wee were in begging for them.  
Luke 17. 12, 13. The Samaritan among  
the other Lepers , he also lifted up his voice  
with them, saying, *Jesus, Master, have mercy  
on us :* And verse 15, 16. hee is as earnest  
and loud in his praises : *and one of them, when  
he saw hee was healed, turned back, and with a  
loud voice glorified God , and fell downe at  
Jesus feet giving him thanks , and hee was a  
Samaritan :* And verse 19. Christ himself  
justifieth his importunity as a fruit of his  
faith , *Go thy way , thy faith hath made thee  
whole.*

## CHAP. II.

*Touching Opportunity of Prayer.*

**W**E come now to the second thing included in the Modification of this duty of Prayer; that it be *without ceasing*. Namely, that we pray opportunely. When *Paul* saith, that *without ceasing*, (*Ἀδιαλείπτως*) hee had remembrance of *Timothy* in his prayers night and day, *2 Tim. 1. 3*. Hee meaneth that upon all occasions, and as hee had any opportunity, hee did remember him in his prayers. Hee taketh all opportunities offered by the Lord to pray, and omitteth them not; hee prayeth *without ceasing*. It is then the duty of all the Lords people to pray opportunely, or to take all holy opportunities to pray unto the Lord. For the better handling of this duty, consider these particulars,

First, That it is seldome that any time is unseasonable for prayer.

Secondly, That yet there is a time when the Lord will not listen to prayer, no, not of his own people.

Thirdly, That in mercy the Lord useth to offer unto his people opportunities and seasons of prayer.

Fourthly, That the Lords people are bound to take or improve all such opportunities of prayer.

Touching

Prayer is rarely unseasonable at any time.

Sometimes prayer is not so seasonable.

1 When the persons praying are under just offences.

2 When under some guilt of sin not actually repented of.

Touching the first very briefly, that is very rare that any time is unseasonable for prayer, it appears in this, that the Saints are enjoined to pray alwayes, *Luke 21.3 Ephes. 6.18*. And this, that the title of God is to be a God hearing prayers, *Psal. 65.1.2. thou that art hearing (YHVH) prayers*. He is alwayes hearing the prayers of some of his people, and ready to hear the rest.

Touching the second a little more largely that there is a time when the Lord will not listen to prayer, no, not of his people; that praying at such times, they pray out of due season. It is not then so fit a time for them to pray. As;

1 When they are under offences unpented of, *Matth. 5.24. First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*. It is not seasonable for *Jobs* friends to come to offer to God, untill reconciled to injured *Job*. *Job 42.7,8*. If wee are out with the favourites of the King of Saints, it is not seasonable to come to the King with Petitions. It is not a season to seek peace with Christ the head, when peace with his members is not sought. If our heavenly Father should not hold off his respects to childrens requests, who offend their brethren, they would never seek to be reconciled.

2 When any of them doe too willingly and contentedly remaine under the guilt of some known sinne against the Lord, *1sa. 1.15. When you make many prayers, I will not hear*



hear, your hands are full of blood, vers. 16. Wash you, make you cleane, put away the evil of your doings, &c. vers. 18. Come now, and let us reason together, &c. And then onely it is seasonable to pray, when wee lift up our hands and hearts. *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayers. Josh. 7. 10, 11. Wherefore lyeest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, Job 11. 13, 14. If thou preparest thy heart, and stretchest out thy hand toward heaven, if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away, else all that is to no purpose. God beareth not sinners, (i.e.) impenitent ones, Job. 9. 31. It is no fit season for us to goe a wooing to Christ, if not clear of privy leagues with any of our lusts; nor is it seasonable to trade with the Lord in prayer, if wee have any kinde of traffick with his proclaimed enemies.*

3 When wee are under any special power of passions and distempers, and (as then not seeing the sinne of them) to lift up wrathfull hands is unacceptable, and so unseasonable, *1 Tim. 2. 3. Lift up pure hands without wrath.* It is not seasonable to offer up our sacrifice with such common, yea, wild-fire. Such leaven of wrath and malice is apt to sowre our very *Mincha*, and maketh it come as out of due season. Such was the petition of *James* and *John* to Christ, *Ln. 9. 54, 55. Wilt thou that wee command fire to come down from heaven to consume them?* Such  
were

3 When under special hurries of lusts.

were *Jobs* petitions, *Job* 3. from vers. 3. to vers. 11. Such was that of *Jonah*, Chap. 4. *Take away my life from me.* Look as it is in a strong blustering time, knocks at the door are scarce heard, if at all; so is it here, the noyse of our distempers out-soundeth the voyce of our knockings in such like prayers. It were better to pause a while till the blustering noyse bee abated. And as *Revel.* 1, 3. Silence was made a while before the holy Incense was offered; so should it be here.

4 When under  
hurries of oc-  
casions.

4 When our heads and hearts are overfull, and even fore charged with carnal occasions, and inordinate thoughts about them, it is not so seasonable to go abruptly from such a crowd, and throng into the holy presence of the Lord without some pause. It is most unseasonable to enter upon so holy discourse with God, with so many battles attending us, when there should bee but one speaker. *Eccles.* 5. 1, 2, 3. Such rashnesse is irregular, and therefore unseasonable, such a foolish seekers prayer will bee no better than a dream arising from multitude of businesse stuffed with multiplicity of unseasonable impertinent, and independent expressions.

5 When pray-  
ing in remedi-  
less cases.

5 When wee come to pray in remediless cases, or for persons past recovery, *Jer.* 11. 14. *Pray not for this people, for I will not hear them when they cry unto me for their trouble,* & *Sam.* 16. 1. *How long wilt thou cry for Saul, seeing*

*I have rejected him.*

6 When wee will bee praying at such times wherein other Ordinances do call for our attendance. As when wee will be praying at home, when wee should rather bee in the publick Assembly; or praying in our Closets, when Religious Family-exercise requires our presence.

6 When praying whi st o-  
ther Ordinan-  
ces call for our  
attendance.

Now let us consider of Prayer-seasons offered by the Lord, which hee requireth us to take. These opportunities are either general or special. The general opportunity of prayer, is that general Season of Grace held forth in the offers of the dispensations of the Gospel. *Isa. 1. 5, 6. Seek him whilest hee may bee found.* Whilest God may bee found, it is a season to seek him, *Isa. 21. 12.*

Most season-  
able to pray.

¶ When God  
is near us; more  
generally by  
his word.

*If you will inquire, retorne, come.* Whilest the Prophets incourage to come, it is a season to inquire. Our calling and cry is but the echo of the Lords call. *Psal. 27. 8. When thou saidest, Seek my face; my heart answered, Thy face Lord will I seek.* It is the season of the echo to wait upon the voyce; a demand of Grace upon a former offer of it, its very seasonable. This blessed day work is most suitable to the day time of the Gospel, and Grace of God. But besides this general opportunity, there are some more special praying seasons, *Psal. 31. 8. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a finding time* (as it is in the Hebrew.) As bountifull Princes have their, so the Lord

R

hath

hath his special seasons for petitioners to come in with their suits, and have each their dayes of audience.

Our blessed Father hath his set dayes of paying to each childe his portion of mercy and blessing, upon demand and suit for it. Now these special seasons of Prayer are of three sorts.

I When God in special sort is near to us. Or secondly, We in special sort near to him. Or thirdly, In case of emergencies, or special necessities calling for speedy help.

When more  
specially God  
is near to us.  
As

First, When God in special is near to us, then call upon him *while he is near. Isa. 55.6.* The Lord as our gracious King goeth his holy progress, and now hee is nearer this people and such and such subjects; and now again he is nearer to others: Let each accordingly take and observe their particular seasons of holy approaches to him with their suits. If the loadstone bee near, the very iron moveth; the approaches of the Lord to us, have, or should have this holy magnetical attractive vertue to draw us near to him in Prayer.

I By some special act of  
mercy.

I Now the Lord is thus in special sort near to us, by some special mercy vouchsafed to us, as when answering to former prayer, or the like. *Psal. 34. 18. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart.* Yea, but wherein, or whereby doth hee shew that hee is nigh to them? It followeth, *He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*

Gods

Gods ordering some special favour to his people by his providence is called his visiting of his people. The Saints repairing to the Lord with fervent earnest prayer, is called their visiting of the Lord, *Isa. 26. 16. Lord in trouble have they visited thee; how? they have poured out a prayer to thee, &c.* When God first beginneth to give us a gracious visit, it is seasonable and futable for us to give him Prayer-visits, *Exod. 33. 17. And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also which thou hast spoken,* vers. 18. *And Moles said, I beseech thee shew me thy glory. Moses made Gods time of giving, to bee his opportunity of begging mercy.* If ever the Saints hearts are filled with love, it is when they partake of manifest tokens of the Lords love to them; and if ever it bee a season of this friendly talking with God, or praying, it is then, when in such a friendly frame, *Psal. 116. 1. I love the Lord because he hath heard my voyce.* And vers. 2. *Therefore will I call upon him,* or speak lovingly to him. Words spoken to God in love, or from love to him, come the most seasonably, for they are ever well taken, they are taken in love by the Lord. When the Lord in his providence bestoweth upon his people something whereon the image of his special favour is instamped, it is a time in special to acknowledge the Lord by prayer: as praying is called, *Prov. 3. 6. In all thy ways acknowledge him,* even by prayer of faith.



2 By special  
motions of his  
Spirit.

Pfal. 27. 8.

Secondly, The Lord is thus near to us by any special motions of the Spirit, especially such as put us upon prayer; when the Lord doth inwardly speak, even to our hearts such like words, as *Isa. 43. 11. Ask of me touching my sons and daughters, and concerning the work of my hands, command me; or when Christ by his Spirit saith to our hearts, as sometimes hee did to them by word of mouth. Joh. 16. 23, 24. Hitherto ye have asked nothing: Ask that your joy may be full. Or as hee said to his people, Cant. 2. 14. Let mee hear thy voyce, for it is sweet; It is now a time to speak to the Lord that wee seem not to sleight him. When thou saydst (namely, by the Spirit inwardly, as well as by the Word outwardly) Seek my face; my heart answered, Thy face Lord will I seek. If that holy motion to Solomon 1 King. 3. 5, 9. Ask what I shall give to thee &c. made even a sleeping-time, a supplicating-time; much more may holy motions of God this way, make our waking-time our wrestling seasons. Such drops of a Spirit of prayer are handfells and pledges of largeness; pouring out of that Spirit upon us, if thankfully received and improved, Zach. 4. 10. Such solliciting directions given us from the Lord, argue that assuredly it is both a praying and speeding time. If the Lord prepare the heart, if hee fit it, and put it upon prayer, hee teach it how to pray, He surely boweth his ear to hear. Psal. 10, 17. It is *Esters* time our*

to ask, when King *Ahasuerus* himselfe putteth her upon it; *What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee; and thy request? it shall be performed, Ester 7.2.* So is it here. And let none abuse this to strengthen any fond *Grindletonian* conceit, that wee must never pray till wee finde the Spirit first mooving us to it. It is our opportunity indeed of Prayer when the Spirit mooveth thereto, but not the onely season of prayer, as wee have in part shewed, and must further mention other seasons thereof as well as that. Wee must sometimes pray, that wee may pray, and when as wee are apt to judge our selves, that wee are most unfit to pray, then to pray that wee may become fit to pray. As by speaking men are fitted to speake, by running to runne, by wrestling to wrestle, by labouring to labour.

Thirdly, Hee is thus near us by some special word of his mouth, especially by some gracious promise spoken and manifested to us; and that also is a special season for prayer, 2 Sam.7.27. *For thou, O Lord God, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray unto thee.* It is a season of this holy talking with God, when hee first enters speech with us by some such words of his Grace. It is seasonable to open our mouths wide, and receive grace and peace, when the Lord setteth open any such

2 By some special promises made ours.

golden pipe of both, as is the Promise: the Gospel is in every part of it, *the ministratio*  
*of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. 13. 8. *and of life*, ver. 6  
*and of faith*, Rom. 10. 8. *and of peace*, 11.  
 57. 19. The words of Gods Grace pacifi  
 and still the tumults in the soul, and enlarge  
 and quicken the heart. Now if ever it bee  
 season to speak to the Lord in prayer, it  
 when unmannerly distempers (which  
 often silence us at best) retreat, and are pre  
 to silence, and when our hearts are set at a  
 holy liberty to pour out themselves before  
 the Lord.

4 By some fa-  
 therly correcti-  
 on.

Fourthly, the Lord is near his people  
 when he visits or afflicteth them. *What (saith  
 I answer him when he visits (or afflicts?)* Job  
 31. 14. and Job 7. 18. *What is man that thou  
 shouldest visit him?* The Lord is then near  
 to us to try us: to take an account of our  
 ways, to correct our mis-doings, to observe  
 how we carry it under affliction, to comfort  
 and support us in affliction, to sanctify  
 affliction to us, and to save and deliver us  
 out of the same, and therefore in special  
 sort it is seasonable to cry unto him, and  
 ask a correcting father forgiveness, Lam.  
 5. 15. *If any be afflicted, let him pray*, Psa.  
 50. 15. *Call upon mee in the day of trouble  
 and I will hear thee: and thou shalt glorifie me*  
 God doth then speak to us by his Rod  
 Micah 6. 9. It is therefore seasonable then  
 to answer him in our prayers. If ever a gra-  
 cious heart bee humble, sensible, serious

and lively, it is then when in affliction, when in the fire. Such a time of pangs is a time of crying out to the Lord; when God visiteth saints by affliction, it is seasonable for them to visite him with prayers, *Isa. 26. 16. Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer to thee when thy chastening was upon them.*

5 The Lord is near to us by some special deliverance out of affliction: this is likewise the Lords visiting time when hee cometh to see us, *Zeph. 2. 7. For the Lord their God shall visit them, and save them from their captivity.* If God wil thus visit his vine, the people of God look at themselves as ingaged to call upon him, *Psal. 80. 14. 18. compared. Behold, visit this thy vine, quicken us; so will we call upon thee.* When the winter of the Churches afflictions and captivity is over, Christ expecteth to hear his Churches voyce in prayer, *Cant. 2. 10. 14 Zach. 13. 9. I will bring the third part through fire, and they shall call upon me.* A person newly delivered out of this pit, *Job 33. 24, 36. Hee shall pray unto God, and hee will be favourable unto him.* Little do Christians, sharing in a time of the Lords clemency and pitty, in their deliverance from sick-bed. and other notable hazards of life and livelihoods, know, what a fair opportunity they have now in their hands to speak for further mercy, so as to speed; and how much they lose, if they grow slighty or

5 By some special deliverance.

negligent in improving such an opportunity of prayer, when if ever, praying dispositions stir afresh in them.

6 By accomplishing his promises actually.

6 God is thus near us when his time of special Promises draweth near. Then Gods Faithfulness, Immutability, Almightyness begin to come into our very views. And it is a season then for us in our prayers to goe out and meet the Lord, *Jer. 29. 12.* *Then shall yee call on mee, and yee shall go and pray unto mee, and I will hearken unto you then. When? verſ. 10. When the seventy years shall bee accomplished at Babylon, I will viſit you, and performe my good pleaſure towards you, and then ſhall you call upon mee.* *Dan. 9. 2, 3.* *I Daniel underſtood by Books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that hee would accompliſh ſeventy years in this deſolation of Jeruſalem; and I ſet my face unto the Lord to ſeek by Prayer and Supplication.* Such a time is a ſpeeding-time; for ſo verſe 23. *At the beginning of thy Supplications the Commandement came forth;* and therefore the fitteſt ſeaſon for prayer. A fair day may well bee expected to enſue, when the Saints are ſo early at this work of prayer, even as ſoon as any morning-beam of Divine righteouſneſs begins to break forth. And ſurely, ſuch a time is this very preſent time, when if ever, now it is a ſeaſon of frequent and fervent praying. When the Lord is coming out in view, to accompliſh his great deſigns of



of Grace to his Churches, and vengeance to Antichrist and his Abettors. When his wondrous works in our native Land, and the Neighbour-nations do declare that his name is near.

A second special season of Prayer is, when we are neer to the Lord (There being times when wee are far off from God.) True it is, that all the Saints are alwayes neer unto the Lord, in respect of their reconciliation wrought by Christ, and their Union with Christ, God-man, and the like. Yet are there differences of their actuall neerfulness to the Lord in many other respects, as might bee shewed in sundry particulars. Let us instance onely in two or three branches of this holy neerfulness of ours to God. Which are severall Opportunities of prayer.

Wee are neer to God by some solemn ingagement, whether more publickly, or secretly plighted before the Lord. Thus *Israel*, *Psal. 148. 14.* was a people neer to the Lord. And *what Nation is there so great (said Moses, Deut. 4. 7.) unto whom God is so neer, as the Lord our God is neer to us in all that wee call unto him for?* *Jer. 30. 21.* *I will cause him to draw near, and hee shall approach to mee: For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto mee, saith the Lord?*

Secondly, when we are near to God, As,

1 By some special ingagement.

Secondly, Wee are neer to God, when upon any worke of Reformation of special

2 By some choice reformatory work.

special enormities in our selves or others, which alienates them or us from the Lord. Zealous-reforming-Rulers, whose hearts stand bent, as much as in them lyes, to reduce the Church to its Primitive purity and perfection, they are said in that respect also, as well as others, to *engage themselves to approach to the Lord.* Jer. 30. 20, 21. compared. So zealous reforming *Aza*, and others joyning with him in that work, are said to be with God. 2 Chron. 14. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 15, 2, 7, 8. compared. So those zealous friends of Christ that set themselves against the Babylonish Whore, and her abominations, are said to *bee with Christ.* Revel. 17. 14. And surely as they are with him, so hee is that while with them, as hee said. 2 Chron. 11. 2. *The Lord is with you, whilst you are with him.* And there being such neerness betwixt them and God, then surely is it a choice season of speaking with God in prayer. For indeed it is a choice speeding time, as the Prophet there addeth. *And if you seek him, hee will bee found of you.* Isa. 1. 16, 17, 18. *Wash you, make you clean, &c. Come now, and let us reason together:* It is the fittest time to offer up this holy Incense of Prayer in these fiery-zealous-times; and to plead with the Lord when make-bate and alienating finnes are removed. Thus godly *Nehemiah* taketh such an opportunity for Prayer, *Nehem.* 13. 14. 22, 29. 31.

Re-

*Remember me, O my God, for good.* When the Graces of the Spirit have been stirring in one good worke, they are the fittest to bee imployed in another. And when wee have been doing for God, if wee take the advantage of time, and of our hearts to speak to him, hee will be doing for us; if wee give any thing to him, hee will assuredly give us something that is better if we ask it.

3 A third special season of Prayer is, When any special extremities and urgencies are upon us. Prayer being one of our last means to be used for attaining succour from God; and our very extremities having their cry in the ears of the Lord, it will bee most seasonable that wee joyn our lips with theirs, that they make together the lowder, and more prevailing out-cry. Its meetest for us then to go a begging to the door of Grace, when in such extream necessities. God accounts the time of our extremities in asking, to bee his opportunities of hearing and helping. Let us instance in these four cases.

3 When in extremities. As in case of

First, In case of intricacies of providence, which meerly concerns our selves or others. Now in such cases of riddles of providence, Prayer is most seasonable, being תְּסֻלָּה the usual Hebrew word for Prayer, a repaire to the Lord for inquiry, or for his sentence in a case of controversie. *Rebeckah* found by experience that her going thus to God to inquire in that difficulty was very opportune,

1 Intricacies of providence.

*Gen.*

*Gen. 25. 22, 23.* The Lord interprets to her the meaning of that unwonted struggling of twins in her womb. *David* when to remove his habitation, and yet not knowing whither, findes this inquiry seasonable, by his answer, *Go unto Hebron*, 2 Sam. 2. 1. When that sad affliction was on *David*, and his people, and the particular cause unknowne, this inquiry came in season, and made discovery wherefore the Famine had been so long upon them, 2 Sam. 23. 1. *Asaph* doth but go into the Sanctuary, and then all his hard questions about the reasons of the wickeds prosperity are answered, and all that cloud on his minde scattered, *Psal. 73. 17. Until I went into the Sanctuary, and then I understood their end, &c.*

By masterly  
distempers.

Secondly, In case of some masterly distempers gaining upon us, and wee know not how to redresse the same, though wee sadly mourn under it. Such a time of need is a time of speeding in seeking for answerable helpe at the Throne of Grace. *Heb. 4. 15, 16* compared. When any lust begins to grow more seditious against the Lord Jesus. When it becometh more head-strong against his sacred Majesty, and will not bee curb'd by all our expressions of shame and sorrow, and detestation, and defiance of it; It is high time to draw a solemne Petition to our gracious King, to take some effectual order to suppress it.

Difficult  
vice.

3 In case of some weighty service of God,  
which

which wee look at as above our strength. Now must young *Solomon*, that thinks himselfe but a childe for such imployment, ask of God, *1 King. 3. 5, 6, 7, &c.*

4 In case of greatest danger impending, as when, *Yet forty dayes, and Niniveh shall bee destroyed. Jonah 3. 4.* Now (if ever) poor *Ninivites* must call mightily to the Lord: and *vers. 10. God saw their works, and repented him of the evill, Exod. 32. 10.* Gods hand is up against *Israel* with his slaughtering weapon. Now pray *Moses*, or never; and hee did so, *vers. 11. 14.* God repented of that evill also.

4 Danger impending.

Touching the last particular, That we are bound to take these opportunities of Prayer, it is undeniable, we are bound to *pray without ceasing*, and therefore to bee taking all opportunities to pray. And wherefore else doth the Lord put such a Talent of opportunity of prayer into our hands, but that hee expecteth the faithful, and fruitful improvement thereof to bee made by us? or else hee will assuredly take his time to expresse his displeasure against us, for so grosse a neglect of his grace, and of our own soules advantage. But that we may be quickned up to pray opportunely, or to take all opportunities of Prayer. Consider,

Motives.

1 That opportunity is the very cream and flower, and spirits, yea, the very All of time. Hence this, *Pray continually (i.e.)* opportunely; hee that prayes as oft as he hath op-

This Opportunity is the best and all of Time.

por-



2 Tis an ingagement to the Lord to hear.

3 It is the grace and beauty of prayer.

4 It useth to succeed well.

portunity, prayeth alwayes.

2 That opportunity of asking offered by the Lord, doth (as I may say) ingage the Lord to answer. Why should the Lord set out such Almshouses, and Audience-daies, and some way signifie it to his people, if hee meant not to hear and help them? Friends in such a case stand upon their credit, if they appoiat times to meet, and to entertaine a friendly discourse with their friends, they are not wont to faile them; So here opportunity of asking given us by the Lord, it imboldneth us to ask, and to expect a seasonable answer.

3 That opportunity of Prayer, it doth grace and beautifie our Prayers. As every thing else is beautiful in its season, *Eccles. 3.11*. So is Prayer in its season; Opportunity is a wheel to the chariot of prayer, which safely, strongly, and swiftly carrieth it in before the Lord. A word spoken in season to men, is (in the Hebrew phrase) a word spoken upon the wheels, *Prov. 25.11*. So is it in these words spoken to the Lord in their season; yea, Opportunity helpeth to carry our prayer also in an holy state before the Lord, as upon a royall Chariot-wheel. Opportunity of Prayer greatly furthers their acceptance in Christ. These fruits of our lips also are then best, and most welcome to the Lord, when brought forth in their season.

4 That seasonable Prayer is ever speeding

speeding prayer, *Psal. 5. 13. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning*; namely, praying in the season of prayer.

5 That opportunity of seeking and getting grace by prayer, and other means, is begged for us by Christ. *In an acceptable time have I heard thee*, as saith the blessed Father to the Mediator, *Isa. 49. 8.* And thence it is that the members of this head of the Church have any such time of acceptance. *2 Cor. 6. 2.* For hee saith, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee. Now is the acceptable time.*

5 It is begg'd for us by Christ.

6 That great will bee our disadvantage, by letting such holy opportunities of Prayer slip; for besides the loss of such jewels, and of what wee might have gained by trading with the same, our spirits will come to bee very much straitned, and hardned, as sad experience in the Saints themselves witnesseth.

## CHAP. III.

## Of Constancy in Prayer.

**W**E come now to the third and last thing held forth in the Modification of the practise of this duty of Prayer, that it be *without ceasing*, (i.e.) Indefinitely, or constantly. It is then our duty to pray indefinitely, or constantly. Now for this Consider,

To pray constantly is,  
1 Not to give out from prayer.

1 What it is to pray indefinitely, or constantly, or what is implied in it? and why we must so pray? and then make wee one brief Use of it.

Touching the first: To pray indefinitely or constantly is, Not to give out from praying: Not to let God alone untill hee doth blesse us, *To pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18.1. Not to give God rest, *Isa. 62.1.* To look to him in prayer, *untill hee shew us mercy*, Psal. 123.1, 2.

Quest.

Quest. May any true childe of God give off prayer for a season?

Ans. 1.

Ans. Yea verily: Gods own deare Saints may be weary in praying, though not so weary of Prayer. The duty it selfe is to them very desirable, in it selfe: But the discouragements may bee such in tempted times, that they may bee even afraid to go to God, to seek his face sometimes. *Psal. 6.6.*

*I am weary with my groaning, and* 89. 3.

*I am weary of my crying, yet hee gave not* Godly ones  
off wholly, or not long, *verse 13. But as* may give out  
for me, my prayer is unto thee. If they give from prayer  
out for a spurt from solemn Prayer, they son.

cease not to be darting up ejaculatory pray-  
ers. *Jonah 2. 4 I said I am cast out of thy*

*fight, yet will I look unto thy holy Temple.*

When God in deserted times seemeth to  
turn his back upon his Saints, or they

through distrust and distempers are as if  
turning their back upon him, yet they give

many of these love-casts of the eyes of their  
souls towards God; desires will be ever and

anon stepping out of such a gracious heart to  
look after the Lord. That holy fire within

the heart, albeit it blazeth not out, yet will  
be ever and anon sending out these sparks.

There are times wherein the Saints are so  
spiritually sick of sinne and of temptations,

that their very speech faileth them; even  
they have their spiritual swoonds, and may

lye a while speechlesse; yet either they are  
making these holy signes in their fainting

fits, or some of this holy breath is stirring.  
If *Hzekiah* cannot speak out in solemn

prayer, yet can he chatter, and make these  
shorter holy mutterings of his heart, and

these dove-like moanes of his spirit: *Isai.*  
28. 14. *I am oppressed, O Lord undertake*

*for me.*

Quest. How cometh it to passe that any Quest.  
such sad silence or speecchlesnesse in respect of  
solemn

solemn Prayer, doth at any time, or for any shorter space beseech Gods own people?

By reason of  
sad falls.

Backsliding.

Strength of  
unbelief.

Discourage-  
ments.

*Answ.* Sometimes through some dangerous fall into some heinous sin: as other speech is sometimes lost by bodily falls, so is this by such spiritual falls. So *David* after his great fall into the sinnes of murder and adultery, lay speechlesse in this respect for a while, *Psal.* 32. 3. *When I kept silence my bones waxed old;* so do dangerous declinings and backslidings in religion, occasion some temporary cessations of solemn prayer: hence *Isai.* 43. 22. *Thou hast not called upon me O Jacob, but hast been weary of me O Israel.* So *Isai.* 64. 7. *There is none that calleth upon thy name, That stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.* Great guilt breedeth great horreur and great despondency of mind and heart; which with unbelieve blending it self, causeth poor Christians even to give off prayer in their desperate fits. Look as Heathen *Tully* said to his brother, *I would pray to the Gods for those things, but that they have given over to hear my prayers:* or as desperate *Saul*, perceiving God answereth him no more, will go to him no more to enquire, *1 Sam.* 28. So is thus far forth with the Saints; so far as desperate despondencies grow upon them, and represent the Lord to their souls as a justice, they dare not come to him in their fits. Sometimes they pore too much upon discouragements, which they meet with in prayer.



Again, it is a most free, and best privileged frame of spirit: and hence also opposed to that servile frame, and imbondaging fear. *ibid.* Is any free to pray, & free in praying? surely those imbondaging cords of slavish distempers are broken in sunder.

A privileged frame,

A praying frame is likewise a most evangelical frame: being redeemed from the Lawes rigour and confinement, we are most at liberty to addresse our selves thus, as children to our heavenly Father. *Gal. 4. 5, 6.* To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the Adoption of sonnes: and because yee are sonnes, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Sonne in your hearts, crying, *Abba Father.*

An evangelical frame.

A praying frame is also a most heavenly and gracious frame. A spirit of grace, and spirit of supplication, or a spirit disposing, or carrying out to powre out holy Supplications, are inseparable companions. *Zech. 12. 10.* I will powre out upon them a spirit of grace and of supplication. No grace is wanting, where a spirit of prayer is not wanting. All and every grace is stirring, where that spirit of praier is working.

A heavenly and gracious frame.

A praying frame is an humble frame of heart: the Saints never mourne more savingly over their sinnes, even as crucifying the Lord Jesus, then when in such a frame. *ibid.*

A praying frame is a believing frame, and a believing frame is a praying frame; when have they the most clear and effectual

An humble and believing frame.

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A praying frame is a believing frame, and a believing frame is a praying frame; when have they the most clear and effectual



views of him whom they have pierced. *ibid.* To conclude this, a praying frame both furthers our delight in prayer, and maketh it every way more easie & pleasant to us: that we are not so apt to give out through emergent difficulties or discouragements therein; yea, and it furthereth the good successe of our prayer with the Lord himself.

*Quest.*

*Quest. How may a believer maintain in himself a praying frame?*

*Ans.*  
Helps to  
maintain a  
praying  
frame.

*Ans.* 1. Let such as would hold up such a blessed frame in their hearts, be daily sucking from the flowers of Gods providences and promises, some spirituall sweetness; and then our spiritual combs will be dropping ripe. Droan-like Professors, whilst they neglect this, and live upon an old stock of grace or comfort received, they grow altogether little to prayer; they have enough already, what need they ask more? But this Bee-like diligence in the Saints, will make their lips like the dropping honeycomb: whence that by way of allusion, *Cantic. 4. 11.* And this is done mostly by daily meditation, whereby we do in a holy wise, sit and dwell upon, and draw out the sweet and sap which is in Gods words and works. *Psal. 5. 1.* Consider my meditation, he meaneth his prayer. What David suck't and brought into the retired corner of his soul by holy contemplation, he dropped it out in prayer. Meditation filleth the vessel of a gracious heart, and prayer bro-

Meditation  
upon Gods  
word and  
works.

cher

cheth it, openeth the heart, letteth, and poureth out the precious things therein: By meditation we beat the spices, and cut the offering to pieces, and lay them in order, fit to be offered, and then we are the fitter to offer the same up in prayer. Meditation diggeth and searcheth, and findeth out the precious metals and materials, which being ready at hand, are the sooner and the better minted in prayer.

2. Let such be improving all praying motions, and stirrings. We shall never hold on in prayer *without ceasing*, 1 Thes. 5. 17. and *in continual praying*, ver. 18. unless we attend that counsel, *verse 19. Quench not the spirit*, even in any strong, warme, and lively motions also, which he may make that way in our hearts. David, who saith, Psal. 109. 4. *That he gave himself to prayer*: or as it is in the Hebrew, *I Prayer*, As if made up of prayer, and doing little else but praying: he saith also, Psal. 27. 8. *When thou saidst, Seek my face; my heart answered, Thy face Lord will I seek*: hee did not slight or put off, or put by any strong motions of the spirit in his heart to seek the Lord, but made faithful and fruitful improvement thereof. Christ putting the Church upon it, *to let him hear her voice*, Cantic. 2. 14. *the verse 17. hath a request ready for him*. And so, Chap. 8. 13. *Cause me to hear thy voice*, saith Christ to the Church. *verse 14. She speaketh prayer-wise, Make hast my Beloved.*

2 Improve-  
ment of moti-  
ons to prayer.

3 Frequency  
in ejaculati-  
ons.

3. Let such be oft and much in ejaculatory prayer: we may be sure to finde our hearts in elevated frames, when we have been oft heaving and lifting at them. When wee have been dealing with God just before, and have made so many short essayes, we are the fitter to deal with him more solemnly. *Moses* was (as I may say) tampering and catching at the Lord thus, before he spake out so solemnly, as *Exod.* 32. 11, 12, 13. *Lord why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people? &c.* For God (*verse* 10.) saith to *Moses*, *Let me alone.* When we have so oft whispered thus with God beforehand, we are the fitter to talk and speak out before him. *Psal.* 61. 1. *Hear my cry, attend to my prayer;* yet nothing expressed what hee sayd: he was at it in ejaculatory crying and praying, and thence is so bent for more solemne prayer, expressed in the verses following. *From the end of the earth will I cry to thee, &c.* These running grasps and trips do much help our holy wrestling, praying: art and skill and courage: when we do ejaculatory prayers oft sally our upon our spiritual enemies, sinne, Sathan, and the world, we are the fitter to maintain a solemne fight against them in our more solemne prayers.

4 Poverty of  
spirit.

4. Let such maintain in their souls that precious frame, poverty of Spirit. That will teach us praying eloquence, help us much with praying Arguments, and quicken  
up

up in us all praying desires, as we see persons pinched with extream wants and penury: of all others, the poor oppressed ones (as the Hebrew is) *Psal. 10. 17.* have their hearts set, and fitted by God for prayer: *Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the poor, thou wilt prepare (or fix) their heart (namely to pray) thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: namely their prayer.*

3. To pray indefinitely, is to be very frequent in prayer; so we use to say, you are alwayes doing thus or thus: we mean, you are very often doing so: *Joh. 16. 23, 24. Ye have asked nothing (i. e.) but very seildome: Aske; that is, more frequently: frequent prayer keepeth every grace active; frequent uttering our wants and Ayles, keepeth us humble; the often opening of our spiritual wounds, keepeth us tender: the more we trade with God about heavens Commodities, the more it keepeth up the price of them in our hearts; we then vend, and utter them readily, in other parts of our holy conversation; and making quicker sale that way, we make the quicker return again to God for more.*

Quest. *How oft must we pray?*

Quest.

Ans. As oft as opportunity is offered (as was said before) yet twice a day at the least, must be to us a time of praying.

Ans.

Hence that morning and evening sacrifice

How oft we must pray.

fice of old, unto which the Prophet alludeth, and calleth it a *seeking of God evermore*; as held out in his Tabernacle, *Psal.* 105. 4. The very Birds, morning and evening (and some also (as the Nightingale) in the night also) are in their manner lifting up their notes unto their maker and maintainer. *Give us this day our daily bread*, must needs imply a daily prayer for it: and as twice a day (at least) our bodies need supply of bread, so is it fit, that both body and soul be employed twice a day in solemn seeking of the Lord about that, and all other things which we need, or the blessing of the Lord thereupon.

*Quest.*

*Quest.* Suppose a Christian take the seasons of morning and evening for family-prayer: must he likewise take the same season for closet-prayer also?

*Ans.*

*Ans.* Yea, we should, as much as in us lyeth, and the providence of God ministreth opportunities of it, indeavour the same; one duty may not willingly be omitted because of the other. It hath been proved that both are duties, and the Saints will have respect to all, and every of Gods Commandments: As a Christian is considered singly and absolutely, so closet, secret retired prayer apart lyeth upon him; but as in relation to others, so also prayer with others is his duty: as his estate is, so is his bond of duty doubled.



doubled. The carnal heart of man will more cavil, and startle at secret prayer by our selves alone, then at that with others: our natures will lesse easily be strangers to services to which others are privie (as we see in Hypocrites, and Familists) than to such as the Lord onely beholdeth: but no wiles or slights of our hearts or Satan, should draw us from a commanded duty in Scripture. And indeed, we under the Gospel should not be lesse in holy serving of God with our spirits, than those under the Law, but rather more. Hence it is, that the wooden or Incense-Altars for the incense of prayer, is in *Ezekiel* Typically represented to be much larger under the times of the Gospel, than ever under the Law. That under the Law was a *Cubit in length, a Cubit in breadth, and two Cubits in height*. *Exod. 30. 1, 2, 3.* That which *Ezekiel* seeth in vision, is three Cubits high, and two Cubits long: the breadth is indefinite, and unlimited, *Ezek. 44. 22.* Shewing, that the Saints under the Gospel would make much more improvement of the Lord Jesus (their holy Altar) in prayer, and make use of his mediation and Intercession, by Faith, in their heavenly sublimated supplications, for height more sublime, for continuance more stable and lasting, &c. than the Saints of old were ordinarily wont to do. Hence a Spirit of supplication promised in those dayes,  
not

not to be barely dropped, but abundantly to be poured out upon the Saints. *Zeck. 12. 10.*

4 To be constant in a course of prayer.

4 To be indefinient in prayer, is to be constant in a course of prayer daily; implied also in dayly prayer to be made for daily bread: Hence *Paul* injoyning praying alwayes, joyneth persevering, or holding on our course in prayer. *Eph. 6. 18. to Col. 4. 2. Continue instant in prayer.*

Reasons why we must pray constantly.

As for Reasons why we ought to pray thus indefiniently, they are briefly these.

1 God is constant in calling upon us.

1. In that the Lord is very constant in calling upon us. *Esa. 65. 12.* He daily spreads out his hands to us: we may well be dayly lifting up our hearts and hands to him.

2 Christ is constant in pleading for us.

2. In that Jesus Christ intercedeth for us without ceasing; he ever liveth to make intercession for us, coming unto God by him. It is all his worke in a manner, *Heb. 7. 15. and 9. 14.* Therefore we may well be so much taken up with this businesse of prayer.

3 Choice things beg'd are perpetual.

3. In that the main matters of our prayers are everlasting matters; and everlasting mercies call for incessant prayers: yea the prayes one day to be returned for answers of prayers, will be everlasting; and there would be some proportion of perpetuity in our holy prayers.

4. In that the Lord ceaseth not blessing

sing of us, till we cease begging: but if we <sup>4</sup> God continue to bless, give out from praying, he will forbear his wonted giving: so long as *Abraham* whilest we continue to as7. held on asking, the Lord held on answering. *Gen.* 18. When *Abraham* left off communing with the Lord, he goeth up from *Abraham*. If *Joash* be scanty in smiting with his darts, his victories over the *Syrians* are the lesse. *2 Kings* 13. 18, 19. Fewer spiritual wrestlings will issue in fewer spiritual Conquests. The oyl of grace still runneth, as long as there are empty vessels to receive the same. As sometime *Sir Walter Raleigh* answered *Queen Elizabeths* demand, when he would leave begging of her; Not till your Majestie (said he) cease giving: so should we, perceiving that whilest we seek the Lord, he is found of us, As *2 Chron.* 15. 2. We should resolve to hold on seeking, pray, as long as we prosper in it.

5. In that holy constancy in prayer, <sup>5</sup> Constancy in prayer argueth integrity in it. The Hypocrite will not pray alwayes. <sup>ty in it.</sup> *Job* 27. 8, 10. They are elect ones which are so incessant in prayer; cry night and day, *Luke* 18. 7. They are Natural fruits to trees, which they bring forth constantly. So constancy in holy prayer, argueth prayer to be in a holy wise naturall to us as Saints, and that there is in us some praying nature: It is a beam of Divine Immurability, amidst variety of Changes

in other things, yet to be inchangeable in our way and course of holiness, and so of prayer. The Saints, as Saints, whatever their changes otherwise may be, yet are suppliants. *Zeph. 3. 10. From beyond the river of Ethiopia shall my suppliants come.* That is, my Saints, my effectual called ones, which will be continually, even naturally, making holy supplications to me. If abroad, they are conscionable of prayer, and so likewise if at home. If free, then free to pray; if bond, yet the Lords free men to pray. In priviledged and peaceable times, they continue praying, and so they do in boysterous and troublesome times; whilst the light of God shineth in their tabernacles, and on their spirits, they labour in prayer; and so in darknesse of temptations, afflictions, &c. and yet they hold on praying.

6. Special blessings attained by constancy in prayer.

6. In that special and desirable benefites, come by constancy in prayer: for which onely consider that place, *Luke 21. 34, 35, 36.* It's a special help against all worldly temptations. If we would not be far charged with cares of this life, pray alwayes. Men much in prayer with God, are ever the most weaned from the world. They have so many sweet discourses with God, that other talks with the world are more harsh and burthensome to them; they are so oft in speech with the Spouse of their souls, that they cannot affect to speak familiarly with that Strumpet. They are so much in hea-

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ven, that their spirits cannot bee much in earth. *Psal.* 3. 19, 20. They drive so rich and gainful a trade in that celestial City, that they have little list or delight to bee pedling elsewhere about trifles. They fare so well at their Fathers house, that they care not for the devils husks, or the worlds scraps. It is likewise a meanes to escape the displeasure of God, which lighteth upon others; to escape that which cometh as a snare, which taketh and holdeth fast, and bruiseth, crusheth, and killeth others. *ibid.* Besides, it is a means to fit us for Christs second coming. *Pray alwayes*, that ye may bee accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Sonne of man. Persons much in Prayer do so oft set up Tribunals in their own hearts, so frequently do they make up just accounts with God in Christ, and so many times in their prayers are they making references of matters unto that day, that they familiarize with their Judge, and do in a manner facilitate the businesse of that day, so far as it concerneth them.

But here we might justly reprove such Use.  
 in our days, who have formerly been more constant in family, and possible in Closet-Prayer, but now leave it off, seldome or never pray in their closets, and will not joyne with others in prayer. This is charged upon hypocrites as their guise and garbe, *Job* 27. 10. *Will hee alwayes call upon God?*

Quest.



Causes of ceasing in prayer.

Quest.

Quest. Whence cometh it to passe that we faint, or grow weary, or cease from praying?

Ans.

1 Incumbrances in prayer.

Ans. Many bring with them to pray too many incumbrances, and they oppress them; they cannot travel on, to hold out a course of prayer, when they use themselves to carry so much luggage with them.

2 Slightness in prayer.

2. Many do but slightly waste their time in prayer, to no purpose; & so getting nothing by this their trade, they grow weary of it, and men shut up shop (as I may say) like bootlesse they perceive, and in vain force them to pray any longer. *Mal. 3. 14.*

3 Secret wounds and distempers.

3. Many have some secret wounds or diseases yet unhealed; they are annoyed with some malignant distempers of heart, with some predominant lusts, and so cease to faint and give out. They began this holy course, and set out with others in this spiritual way, but cannot hold on with them, their hearts not being sound and right within them, they draw back, and that to perdition: *their heart is lifted up, and not right within them, and so cannot make a spiritual living of it.* In this way of exercise of faith, *Hab. 2. 4.* whereas the *just live on living by faith*, these draw back, *Heb. 10. 38.* Their hearts being not sound in God's statutes, they sustain the shame of Apostasie. *Psal 119. 80.*

Letting slip the word of God.

4. Many do not conscionably receive and retain the holy food of their souls, the word

word of God, which should and would keep us, and preserve the spirits of their souls in running this path of a Christians course, and race, and way. Carelesse and unprofitable hearers will not, cannot hold on long, or with any life, a course of prayer. Whilst Christians are lively and fruitful in hearing the word, they are lively, fruitful, and constant in prayer; but they that give the bare hearing to the Prophets words, minding other matters whilst they are hearing, *Ezek 33. 31, 32.* they are heartlesse, and listless altogether in seeking unto God that they might live. *v. 10.* *If our iniquities bee upon us, and we pine away in our sinnes, how should we then live?* They think it loathsome to look, or speak to God about it.

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CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

*Touching the conditions required to such manner of praying without ceasing: and first of Faith in Prayer.*

**H**AVING spoken of the nature of the duty of prayer here enjoined, and of that which is implied in the notion of praying *without ceasing*; We come now to the third thing at first propounded to consideration: namely, the conditions which are required in such praying importunately, opportunely, or constantly. Now these conditions of incessant prayer are four. 1. Faith. 2. Humility. 3. Sincerity. 4. Watchfulness.

First then concerning Faith in prayer: this is a principle requisite to prayer, it is even all in all in it; without this, prayer is in effect no prayer unto the Lord: hence acceptable prayer is called the *prayer of faith*, *Jam. 5. 15.* *The prayer of faith shall save the sick.* It's not so much a Christians prayer, as his faith in prayer which prevaieth with God for a gracious answer. *Whatsoever ye ask believing, ye shall receive. Matth. 21. 22.*

It is faith which maketh a mans person fit and acceptable, and no wonder then if such a ones prayer prevail. *Cain and Abel both offered sacrifice, hypocrites as well as upright ones pray. God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering, yet not to Cain. Gen. 4. 4.*

But it was by faith that *Abel offered* God

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more excellent sacrifice then *Cain*. Faith is the instrument whereby the spots & stains which else might blatt us and our prayers are removed, both from our persons and prayers. *God purifies our hearts by faith, Act. 15.9. We are sanctified by faith, Act. 26.19.*

The necessity  
of faith in  
prayer.

Faith is a means to make the holiness of Christs person and prayers ours; and that must needs be acceptable to the Lord. *My beloved is mine*, all his holiness and righteousness is mine, saith the believing Church, *Cant. 2.16*. Faith interested the saints in all the succouring attributes and titles of God, or offices and titles of Christ in the covenant of grace, and all the particular promises which we need to improve in prayer: & what then more needful or useful in prayer then faith? Faith sheweth a godly soul, where all its succour lyeth, and where all its strength and life is to be had; and after that, maketh the utmost improvement of all in prayer. Its faith which maketh the Saints keep their due distances in prayer; Giveth God and Christ their due, grace and mercy its due; our selves, and our spiritual enemies, which we complain of, their due: it setteth, and (as I may say) placeth God and Christ in his proper place, seat, and throne; putteth us into an holy Athletique light, ordereth the bounds, proportions, and motions of prayer, and then taketh its best season, and holy advantages, both of God and of our selves, to effect and bring

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The necessity  
of faith in  
prayer.

about the desires which spring from our faith. Faith is a lively spark indeed, and putteth life, both into the suppliants, and into their supplications. Bee wee never so dead, dumb, saplesse, and listlesse in spirituals; if faith begin once to be stirring, it putteth life into the businesse. Now for the better handling of this principall requisite to incessant prayer, Consider,

1. What faith in prayer is required and why so?

2. What is the work of faith in prayer?

3. What helpful means and encouragements are useful to further faith in prayer?

4. What are the marks of faith in prayer?

There is required in prayer Faith.

Touching the first, we say that faith is requisite & acting in prayer, either respecteth God more generally, both in his absolute and relative nature; or Jesus Christ more specially, or the promises, or providences God more particularly.

1. Faith in Gods nature, and in God absolutely considered, is required, as in other approaches to God, so in this prayer. *He that cometh to God, must believe that he is*, and so must believe in God absolutely considered, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him, and so believe in him, relatively considered.

Heb. 11. 6.

But let's instance in some particular herein.

1. For

1. Faith in the immensity and omnipresence of God is required in prayer. <sup>1 In Gods immensity.</sup> True it is, faith in prayer doth and must look at God as in heaven, in respect of his more glorious manifestation and communication of himself. Hence that, *Our father which art in heaven, &c.* 2 Chron. 20. 6. *Art not thou God in heaven? And 2 Chron. 6. 21. Hear in heaven thy dwelling place.* It is a great help to an heavenly spirit in prayer, and to high and holy aimes. It is a notable curb to restrain carnal desires and thoughts in prayer, to eye God as in heaven. But yet albeit faith with its eager eye pierce the clouds, and behold the Lord as above all, yet also, as in all, and through all. Hee conceiveth of God as comprehending heaven it self, and not comprehended either of heaven or earth. So did *Solomon* by faith in that prayer, 1 King. 8. 27. eye God as one whom the heaven of heaven could not contain. Wheresoever the Saints are praying, they are praying as before God. *Dan. 6. 10. Daniel prayeth and giveth thanks before God.* So did *Nehemiah*, Chap. 1. 4. Neither is any frame more suitable to prayer, then that lawful working of heart which proceedeth from faith in Gods immensity. And nothing more quickning to serious attention, and intencion to the duty, and to comfortable expectation of the issue, then a lively apprehension, that we speak not to an absent, but to a present Deity, not to a friend

2. In Gods omniscience.

out of hearing, but to one that is with us, and by us, when we are praying.

2. Faith in Gods omniscience is also required in prayer. Thus *David* in his, and *Jeremiah* in his, and *Solomon* in his prayer, look at God as one that tryeth the heart and the reins, *1 Chron. 29. 17. Jer. 32. 16. 19. 1 King. 8.* And faith in prayer cometh not to bring light to God, but rather to borrow light from him in all the businesse of prayer. It knowes his all-seeing eye, as well as his all-hearing eare. Faith maketh a sincere heart the more free and bold with God, because it eyeth him as one who is privy to all it hath to think or speak in prayer. Nothing more terrible to sinners thoughts in their wayes, then that God seeth them. But nothing more comfortable to godly ones then this perswasion, that now they are before an all-seeing one; they are glad that they serve such a master, and speak to such a father, who doth thoroughly know them, and watchfully eyeth them. The suppliants of God have secret things, in secret corners, to commit to the eares of God, and oh, how well is it for them in their steeme, that they may pray to God who seeth in secret! *Matth. 6. 6. Pray to thy Father which is in secret,* (saith *Christ.*) Suppliants are to seek Gods face about matters carryed on by Gods and their own enemies secretly and slyly, and had need eye the Lord as one who seeth what is contrived

and done in the dark: yea, sometimes they are so sorely assailed, and charged by the wily enemies of their soules, that they have no way left them, but to appeale in prayer to the Lords all-seeing eye, to judge of the false charges of men and diuels; and sometimes of their corrupted tempted consciences, accusing them when they should excuse, disquieted when they should rest in God; Hence, *why art thou so sad O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? trust still in God. Psal. 42. 5. and verse 7. Deep calleth to deep. and verse 8. My prayer shall bee to the God of my life. That Tepilla, or appeale prayerwise unto the Lord as one that heareth, where the right lieth, helped much. Sometimes we know not what to ask as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered, Rom. 8. 26, 27. and he that searcheth the heart, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit. So said Pauls faith, so faith the faith of each gracious suppliant.*

3. Faith in Gods all-sufficiency is requisite: <sup>3</sup> In Gods all-wherefore Christ teaching us to pray, teach- sufficiency. eth us to look at God, as one whose is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, Mar. 6. 9, 13. compared. Hence, the lowest room, and one days residence in Gods house of prayer, is desirable to David. Ps. 84. 10. He believed that God is a sun and a shield, and would withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. verse 11. Moses prayeth to the Lord for



mercy, as one whose mercy would fill all the desires and corners of their souls. *Psal.* 90. 14. *O satisfie me early with thy mercy.* None are more self-empty and needy then true suppliants; and therefore faith in Gods all-sufficiency is most needful to them. None are more sensible of their utter inability to withstand the force and guile of their souls enemies, and so need such a faith the more: yea, the truth is, true suppliants use not to seek of God this or that so much, as God and Christ in that which they seek of him; God in a spouse, in a friend, in liberty, in health, in ordinances, in comforts, and the like; and therefore they must needs eye the Lord as all in all, and all without him to be nothing; yea, in a barren land where no desirable comforts are; and can then in seeking him by faith be satisfied with him, as with marrow and fatnesse, *Psal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, 5. &c.

4 In Gods Almightynesse.

4. Faith in Gods Almightynesse is requisite in prayer. *Paul*, who bowed his knees (or prayed) unto the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *Ephes.* 3. 14. hee looketh on him, as one who was able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, *ver.* 20. So *Jehoshaphat* in his prayer, argueth by faith with God thus, ( *2 Chron.* 20. 6. ) *And in thy hand is not there power and might? that is, there is.* So *Jeremy* in his prayer, *Chap.* 32. 16, 17. *I prayed unto the Lord*

Lord, saying, *Ah Lord, behold thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and outstretched arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.* Sometimes Gods suppliants are put hard to it in the course of their prayers; the last grain of their faith and patience seemeth to be put into the scale: their pressures are such, that they even squeeze them to the last drop of their faith and patience; there appeareth but some small spark thereof under the ashes: they seem to cease in some fainting fits, to be even departing, onely some grasping, panting symptomes left of life therein; namely, some workings of faith in Gods Almightyesse, that he is yet able to help and succour them. It may be, a possibility in respect of Gods Almightyesse, is eyed by faith, and that carryeth them out in prayer. Sometimes the very faith of Gods suppliants is at a stand, at a *non plus*, in regard of Gods will; it is an [if] to them whether he will help; yet they beleieve he can help, and therefore pray; as he did; *Mat. 8. 2. Lord [if] thou wilt, thou canst make me clean:* and such a faith in the Lords Almightyesse doth great things by prayer: For hence that, *I will, be thou clean,* faith Christ, & immediately his leprosie was cleansed. v. 3. He who prayeth in faith of Gods power, shall have beyond his faith the benefit of his gracious and energetical will. So the Centurion in his prayer to Christ believeth that

that if he but will his servants cure, he can work it ; he can even command it by his soveraigne word, *Matth. 8. 8. Speak the word onely, and my servant shall be whole.* He is not sure that he will give out that energeticall word, but if he would but speak the word, he concludeth that hee hath power over all desireable blessings, as servants at his command, even as his souldiers were at his beck, *v. 9, 10.* And Christ approveth of this his faith in his soveraigne power, saying, *Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* So the man mentioned, *Mark 9. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26.* he maketh a request to Christ for his child, but at first questioned Christs power, saying, *If thou canst do any thing, help us ;* and so long his request took not ; but being quickned up by Christs word to faith in his power, that he could do any thing for them, and to expect any thing from him in such a way of believing, *if thou canst believe, (namely, that I can doe any thing for you) all things are possible to him that so believeth ;* then the man cryeth out with tears, *Lord I believe,* (namely, that thou canst do any thing for us ) and so getteth the blessing he prayed for : where prayers are cut up in faith, believing all things are possible to the Lord believed in, and attainable upon believing in him ; there all things are possible and attainable to such a faiths request. Sometimes the suppliants of God deal with God in prayer about  
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intricacies, where the determinations of the will of God seem or are hid, and obscure; yea for such good things as come within the reach of his power; and herein it were sad with them, if faith in Gods power might not, or did not relieve them. Yea, sometimes they deal with God about cases wherein the Lord cometh to expresse his will and minde to the contrary, and yet faith in Gods Almightynesse putteth words into their mouthes, and biddeth, and encourageth them to speak, and to pray to him, and to try it out with him, even in such cases. When God telleth *Moses* that *he will smite the people, and disinherit them*, Num. 14. 11, 12. Yet because *Moses* believed the greatnesse of Gods power, which might else be dishonoured, he pleaderh that the nations will say, that because the Lord was not able to bring them into the promised land, therefore he slew them, and then betaketh him to this hold; *Let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken: the Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, &c.* He looked at him as now able to fulfill the other part of his revealed will, even to be a God pardoning his peoples sins. This set the *Ninevites* a praying, when yet God had said, *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed.* Jonah 3. 3, 4, 5. Yet for ought any knew to the contrary, God might shew them mercy, verse 8, 9. *Who can tell if God may not turne and repent of his fierce anger,*  
that

that we perish not ; and their prayers took effect, verse 10. *God repented of the evil that he had said.* Besides, true seekers of God are continually sensible of mighty, adverse powers of darknesse against them, so that if they had not faith in Gods almightinesse overmatching those powers, they would not pray without ceasing.

5. Faith in the gracious nature, and disposition of God, as in his love, mercy, bounty, compassion, long-suffering, goodness, is required. Nothing more usual with the Saints in their prayers mentioned throughout the Scripture, then to set their faith on work in prayer upon the gracious nature of God. I need not mention the Scriptures. In this ocean faith can freely swim, and bear up all the suppliants burdens, and packets. In this holy Chancery-court, and Court of grace, it can have right in any cases, which concerne the soul. Nothing more sutable to the hungry and thirsting desires of suppliants, and nothing more sweet and satisfying, then the marrow and fatnesse of Gods loving kindnesse : *Psal. 63. 1. to 5. The upright remember the love of the Lord more then wine, Cant. 14.* A poor suppliant seeth here by an eye of faith the true riches which his soul needeth, and that it is here ready for him ; that God is rich in mercie to all that call upon him. So did *David, Psal. 86. 41.* This is a spiritual all-heale



to the poor diseased, wounded soul, crying to God for cure: therein it seeth, and eyeth the particular salves, that are most futable to the several sores of which it complaineth: when the people of God are tossed with tempests of troubles, and temptations, as they were *Isai. 44. 11.* yet they eye this as a sweet and safe harbor; if they can but put in here, they are sheltered in all weathers; if they can but cast the anchor of faith and hope here, they can ride it out securely, and without hurt or losses from any windes which blow.

6 in Gods simp-

6. Faith in Gods simplicity is required. *Solomon* in his prayer locketh at God as alwayes acting, and all act, one whose eyes were open night and day. *1 King. 8. 29.* so the *Psalmist. Psal. 65. 2.* and thou that art hearing (ever hearing) prayers, to thee shall all flesh come. The like faith in the eternity and immutability of God, and his faithfulnesse in what he is to his poor redeemed ones, and in what he saith to them, and doth for them in a way of grace and favour, is needful. *Habakuk* in his prayer maketh use of the eternity of God, *Hab. 1. 12.* Art not thou from everlasting, oh Lord my God, my holy one? we shall not dye. *Nehemiah* in his prayer improveth Gods faithfulnesse, *Chap. 1. 4.* O God, that keepest Covenant and mercy for them that love him. Those afflicted souls mentioned *Psal. 102.* do in

in their prayer improve by faith Gods unchangeableness. *Thou art the same, and thy years have no end,* verse 24, 25, 26, 27. The suppliants themselves, and their cases vary much, and suffer many changes; but faith in these encourageth them to hold on in incessant prayer to the Lord. We might have instanced in the particulars of faiths improvements of the relative nature of God in Prayer: as that of a Father, of a Saviour, Redeemer, and the like, as is often mentioned in Scripture, as *Jer. 14. 8. Esa. 63. 15, 16, 17. and 64. 8. &c.*

7 In the Lord  
Jesus.

But I shall forbear: proceed we therefore to the second branch of faith required in Prayer, namely Faith in the Lord Jesus, *Heb. 7. 23.* Christ is able to save such to the uttermost which come unto God by him. Out of Christ God is a consuming fire; and if we eye him as such a one only, we are driven from him, rather than drawn to him. *Daniel* craveth all things for the Lords sake, *Dan. 9. 17.* *David* requesteth mercies of the Lord for his words sake, or as in *1 Chron. 11. 19.* for his servants sake; the saints of old looked in their prayers towards the Temple. *1 King. 8. 29, 30, 35, 38.* So *Jonah* chap. 2. 4. Now the Temple was a type of Christ, Christ spake of the temple of his body, *Joh. 2.* It was not enough for the Israelites to cry out of wounds, nor for *Moses* to pray with them, or for them; but they must look

to the brazen Serpent, Numb. 21. 7, 8, 9. which in Joh. 3. 13, 14, 15, is made a type of Christ: Christ is the altar whereon we offer all our spiritual sacrifice if acceptable, Heb. 11. 12. And if we do in offering them but touch this blessed altar by faith, that sanctifieth them. Exod. 29. 37. The best incense of our prayers needeth sprinkling with Christs blood. As was typed in that Exod. 30. 10. No intercourse betwixt God & us but by the meanes of this blessed ladder whose foot is on earth, and top reacheth unto heaven, Gen. 28. 12. with Joh. 1. end.

A third branch of faith required in Prayer, is faith in Gods Promises; especially in such Promises as do respect our personal and particular cases and complaints. Jehosaphat in his prayer maketh use of a suitable promise, respecting the present case about which he then besought the Lord, 2 Chron. 20. 6, 7, 8, 9. saying, *If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, &c. we stand before this house, and in thy presence, and cry in our afflictions unto thee, then wilt thou hear and help.* When David also is to seek the Lord for mercy upon his house, he improveth a Promise of God made to that end, 2 Sam. 7. 27. *For thou O God hast revealed it unto thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.* The Lord is so abundant

dant as in goodnesse so in truth, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. that at every paths end, in the way of grace, and race of Godlinesse, he hath placed some well of salvation, some spring of consolation, quickning and encouragement in Christ, to go therein without fainting. All his Ordinances, and precepts have their promises annexed to the faithful observance thereof, and no one ordinance hath more gracious promises made to the conscionable attendance thereupon then this of prayer.

This of prayer, as it is that which in special putteth much honour upon God, so the Lord hath honoured it with many goodly, glorious encouraging promises; now faith maketh use of this blessed treasury, bequeathed in the Lords Testament to prayer, or to his suppliants prayings: Faith wisely layerh out and bestoweth this holy stock, here and there, in this and that case, as need requireth: hardly any prayer-case to bee supposed, but there are promises here and there scattered in the word of God, which speak to that very case, if not directly yet by necessary consequences: Now by that grace of Faith, the godly make sutable improvements thereof, and where the case requireth, drawing such spiritual conclusions from them as put them upon the pleading such holy maxims before the Lord: the Lord seeth it meet to bound the peoples desires, with-

in these holy limits of his Promises, and it is faith that helpeth us to keep within compasse in our Prayers. And surely there is no language more sweet and acceptable to God, then to speak to him in our Prayers, in this holy language of his Spirit and word, in his own language: if we speak in our Prayers no otherwise then the Lord himselfe speaketh in his Promises, there shall be a sweet consort of voice begun by the Spirit in the Promises, seconded by the Spirit of Faith in the Saints Prayers, and answered by God in his Providences.

4. The last branch of faith required in prayer, was faith in God his providences; the Saints in their prayers mentioned in scripture have used thus by faith to improve the Providence of God, as *Psal. 22. 4, 5.* *Our fathers called upon thee, and were delivered.* Isa. 64. The real respects which the Lord bears to his peoples prayers, are practically demonstrated in the Providence of God. Providences of mercy respecting prayer-cases, are but the Promises of God made thereto, acted and executed: Every such providence is an Oracle of God instructing or encouraging us. Faith is a spiritual recorder in the soul and conscience sanctified, it registreth, writeth and noteth down by the finger of the Spirit on the table of the heart, such observable and useful passages; and faith

9. In Gods  
Providences.



callesth for conscience to read them over as need requirerth. There are no cases now, but what in substance have been heretofore; there is nothing new under the Sun. And the Lord in like cases cannot vary, but ever carrieth it like himselfe, so that faith makes great advantage hereof in prayer; the Spirit of God he leadeth suppliants in the same track of holy requests for the substance of them, and what wonder if the same answers and issues are, may be, must be by faith expected? Presidents in prayer-cases, as they are rules to us, so they are arguments with God in our holy pleadings with him in our prayers for his mercy. It is so with men in their Courts and Pleas, Presidents in such and such a Kings reigne, in such a suite, thus and thus issued, according to such or such a Statute, not repealed, are casting matters in law-suits; and so it is verily in our suits in heavens Court, for this or that reliefe which we crave: Presidents of Providences improved by faith, are a currant Gospel-plea.

The work of  
Faith in pray-  
er.

The second thing propounded comes now to be handled, namely, what is the worke and businesse of Faith in Prayer? Prayer is called the *Prayer of Faith*, James 5.15. as if faith were and indeed is the chief instrument of the holy Ghost in the souls of the suppliants to do all in prayer. Let us instance in some particular good

good offices which Faith doth do in and for the souls of Gods poor suppliants in this work and business of Prayer.

1. Faith is a monitor, to instruct and inform the soul truly and throughly of such things as are most sutable and helpful to this holy work : Hence we read of the Psalmist, in his secret lifting up of his heart to the Lord in the night season, he saith, *His reines instructed him*, Psal. 16.7. This knowing grace of Faith in his heart, was the Spirits instrument to teach him. Faith is called the *wisdom of the just*, Luke 1.17. the wisdom of justified persons by Christ, to which they were to be converted, there spoken of : and as other wisdom, so this in special is profitable to direct our mindes and mouths : It is Faith which giveth the soul the truest survey which it hath faithfully made of its emptiness and neediness. It is Faith which most fully and convincingly informeth the soul of the fulnesse and freeness of the riches of Grace in God & Christ, and of his sutableness to us, considering our cases and conditions : It is faith that telleth the soul of its interest and encouragements in the mercies of God, and merits of Christ, and in the Covenant of grace, and any particular branch thereof, so far as the same doth concern its perfect cases about which the soul comes to God in Prayer.

Faith in Prayer acteth as a Queen, and <sup>2</sup> It injoyneth.

(as I may say) a mother-grace, to order, and injoyn, and excite each praying grace unto its proper work therein. When Faith is stirring, it doth in a manner speak, and charge Desire to do its office; reach out thy hand, open thy mouth wide, enlarge thy self (O Desire) to crave these and these mercies which the soul needeth, which the Lord is ready to give. And Love, do thou the like; never a more lovely object presented to thee from one who so dearly loveth the soul wherein thou art. Zeal, be thou fervent, put an edge upon Desire and Love; the case so requireth, the mercies are neer, it's pity they should be lost for want of putting to a little more strength to wrestle for them. Humility, stoop thou the heart fall down, be low and vile before one that is so glorious. Fear, awe thou the heart let it tremble in the presence of the holy One of Israel. Joy, do thou enlarge the heart in the sense of mercies already given by prayer, and more mercies are at hand. Hope, stand thou on tiptoe, and look up, and look out; for verily mercy is not far off: the Lord is neer such secret moves and whispers of faith that are in the souls of Gods suppliants; their spirits are encouraged and moved variously to act in prayer from that faith which they have in the Lord when it is exercised. Look as David's faith in the love of God towards him occasioned & made that speech in his song  
 which

when to praise God ; so that *David* from the strength of his faith therein speaketh to his soul, *And all that is within him to praise his Name*, Psalm 103. 1. The like speech doth faith occasion in a gracious heart, when to pray, requiring all within the same to be employed in furthering the work. So when *David* is to make his prayer to the God of his life, in faith that God will command loving kindness to him, Psalm 42. 8. here is a charge given in his heart to attend it patiently and hopefully ; and distempers are commanded to stand by the while, v. 11.

3. Faith in Prayer is a moderation to regulate and rectifie the souls Pleas ; yea, to dictate Arguments to back those holy pleas. Prayers of faith use to be pleading Prayers, filled and carryed on in lively reasonings with the Lord. And because oft-times the spirit of a Suppliant may be even non-plust almost, and not know how to carry it on, by reason of secret cavils raised in the heart, whether from Satan, or distrust, or otherwise ; Faith then stepping forth, and whispering some spiritual and suitable answers, cleareth up the mist upon the Spirit, and the mistake and sophisme, and so the soul is afresh carried on in his pleading with God, Psalm 77. 7. *Will the Lord cast off ? &c.* this was secretly whispered by distrust, as if God would cast him off ; *but will he do it for ever ?* and so -

3. It doth regulate.

8,9. David his spirit was pinched in these reasonings and cavils; at present he could not positively answer that God would not do so: the cavil of distrust became a real question to his tempted, deserted spirit, by reasoning so much with that whilst he was crying to the Lord, *vers. 1.* but faith gave light to the case, and upon discovery he perceived that these were but cavils of an infirm spirit of his own: *vers. 10.* The case is resolved and determined, through the help and light of Faith exercised, and acted and standing up, which before sat faint; and he concluded this was his infirmity. Faith is a Second to the soul in its holy wrestlings and pleadings with God, to succour it in its suites, both in point of assistance perswading with the heart, that the Lord will prepare the heart to seek him, and so the rather to prevail, *Psal. 10. 17.* and in point of Assurance, *1 Joh. 5. 15.* It is the speech of Faith, *We have what we ask of God.* It is as sure as if it were already granted. And so in point of Acceptance, *vers. 14. We know he heareth,* *vers. 7.* Now when at any time the spirit of a Suppliant beginneth to give out, when any fainting fit is upon it, then Faith reneweth the charge upon the Lord, taketh up the holy weapons which the spirit of the Saints began to lay by, the Arguments which it was ready to forgo; and now the soul gathers up its strength afresh, and plyeth the Lord with renewed strength.



Strength of holy requests : at this passe was *Jonah*, Chap. 2. 4, 7. he said, *he was cast out, yet would look again to the Lord*; and *vers. 7.* when fainting, and when faith minding him afresh of something in the Lord, he is revived, and sends up many Supplications to him. What, give out? will faith say, nay fie for shame. It claps the soul on the back, (as I may say) and bids it chear up, wrestle one bout more, pursue once again; it may be, nay it is likely thou wilt prevail, nay thou shalt indeed prevail.

4. Faith in Prayer is an Agent for the 4. *It pleads* soul to improve and plead all the foregoing Principles and spiritual Topick places mentioned. That of Gods gracious disposition it is a large field, and very fruitful in prevailing Arguments, when improved by faith: so is that of God his All-sufficiency, All-mightiness, Eternity, Immutability: and so is that of Christ considered in his Offices, Merit, Mediation, and Intercession: the Promises of God likewise are several heads of holy Pleas: Faith improveth them wisely, and seasonably, and suitably, as the cases of the same require. It would be improving them all, in and through the Lord Jesus, for the souls succour and support in this Ordinance of Prayer; verifying that *Isai. 12. 3.* *Drawing water out of the wells of Salvation.*

5. Finally, Faith in Prayer becometh (as *s. It undertakes.* it were) the common pledge between the Lord

Lord and the Suppliant, that each shall do right in all that hath been pleaded Faith undertakes to become bound, and to be a pawn to the soul that the Lord for his part will do what is meer, and what becometh him for the soul. And again it engageth it self to the Lord, that by his help the soul shall attend to its duty, which concerneth it. See *Psalms 55.3.* *Dauids* faith you see there, pawneth its credit that the Lord will not, shall not say him nay; *My voice shalt thou hear, O Lord:* and then faithfully promiseth on *Dauids* behalf, that he will and shall rightly order his prayer, and so wait and leave it with the Lord: *and unto thee will I direct my prayer, and look up.*

Helps to faith  
in prayer.

3. In the third place we come to consider of some useful Helps unto sincere Suppliants Faith in Prayer. The Helps and Encouragements to Faith in Prayer may be such as these.

1. Improve  
every may be  
of mercy.

1. Let us take and make all holy advantage of the least *may be* of Mercy, whereon we may ground an expectation of a gracious successe and answer of our Prayers. We may, yea must do thus. Meek ones must seek the Lord, hoping for his mercy when there is but a *may be* of being hid from the Lords anger, *Zeph. 2.3.* Thus did the *Ninevites*: no body could tell they should be delivered, nor assure them of mercy if they did sue for it; but yet none could tell the

the contrary, none could say peremptorily they should perish without remedy. If it be but a *Who can tell*, it is a ground of mighty prayers, and may cherish a spark of hope therein of successe, *Jonah 3. Isaiah* must lift up his prayer, albeit it be but a may be, that God would hear the blasphemous speeches of *Rabshakeh*, against which he was to bend his prayers on *Israels* behalf, *2 King. 19. 4.* A very paradvventure of prevailing in prayer will set *Moses* a praying. *Exod. 32. 30.* No Scripture telleth thee that thou art a cast-away, many Scriptures give thee grounds of a may be at least of salvation. Let that therefore raise thee, though troubled sore, to look and wait for a gracious answer of thy prayer.

2. Labour to be stored with futable Promises to your prayer-cases: it will bee our wisdom to lay up such knowledge of such words of Grace, *Prov. 10. 14.* *Jehosaphat* was not to seek of a Promise futable to that he was to pray for, *2 Chr. 20.* *Nehemiah* had a like promise ready written on the table of his heart, *Nehem. 1. 8, 9, 10.* And be we well acquainted with the Attributes of God, which are virtually Promises and props to our faith in Prayer. *Moses* in his prayer, maketh use of them for that end. *Num. 14. 17, 19.* And the Saints oft elsewhere in the Scripture.

2. Store up futable promises to prayer cases

3. Improve we former experiences,  
both

3 Improve former experiences,

both of our own and others of the gracious dealings of God with us in way of prayer, for meerly (as well as otherwise) they work hope. *Psal. 6. 9. The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping, he hath heard my Prayer.* Davids experience of Gods merciful and faithful performance of all the desires of his soul for him, will make him cry to him with much confidence, *Psal. 57. 1, 2.* Wee may not rest in mercies and blessings received, but we must and must be encouraged from them to reach after and wait for more: if we never have tasted of his goodness to us, when we sought him, yet were we to expect and wait for his gracious answer: but *tasting and seeing how good the Lord is by experience, it is the blessed thing to trust in him.* *Ps. 34. 4, 8.* We may well trust him and rest on him as a God hearing prayers, when we have tryed him to be such a one; or else it will be a shame if speaking it in his word that he is such a one, and then speaking it over sensibly of his works that he is such a one, yet he cannot be believed. If any, surely such as by experience know the name of God (have proofe of that or any other title, or Attribute, or word of his, wherein he makes himself known to us) they will trust in him. *Psal. 9. 10.* Gracious answers of prayer given to the Saints, are precious pledges of our interest in the covenant of grace, and in God as our God; and

we are to look at them, and be encouraged by them, *Zach. 13. 9.* We are also to quicken up our confident expectations of a gracious issue of our prayers from other experiences therein: so the Saints used to do in their prayers mentioned in Scripture, *Psal. 74. 1, 13, 14.* and oft elsewhere; for indeed the Lord in giving answers of Grace to any of his children, hath regard to the good and encouragement of them all: that which the Lord did for, and spake to supplicating, wrestling *Jacob*, (*Gen. 32.*) hee eyed others that were to come after him therein. *Hosea 12. 4.* *He had power over the Angel, &c. and there he (that Angel the Lord himself) spake with [us,] not with him alone.* The regard which the Lord hath to the prayers of destitute ones, is written and recorded for the generation to come, to make a comfortable use thereof, *Psalms 102. 17, 18.* If one of Gods chosen ones fare well in their holy approaches to God, the Prophet will put it plurally in the conclusion he draweth from thence, *Psal. 65. 4.* (the former part of the verse compared with the latter part) *we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house.*

4. Improve we conscionably the Intercession of the Lord Jesus for us. When he was on earth he prayed for us, as you may see in *John 17.* To bee sanctified by his Truth, to be kept from the evil of sin, Apostasie: we pray for union and communion

4. Improve Christs Intercession.



on with the Lord Jesus, such as is very strong, comfortable, and constant whilst we are here, and the eternal enjoyment of the Lord Jesus in another world, but fear lest our sins might intercept and frustrate our prayers; but Christ telleth us (and for our comfort, that *our joy may be full*,) Joh. 17. 13. what is the sum of what hee intercedeth with the Father for on the behalfe of his Apostles, so of all Believers, *vers. 20. &c.*

We will and must needs confesse, that Christs praier was without exception, and that the *Father alwayes heard him*, John 11. How well is it then for us that the Lord Jesus hath with acceptance prevented us, and these mercies are already begged by Christ, and granted of God to our hands? Surely, the Lord hath heard Christ in the desires which hee as Mediatour expressed to the Lord, that we and our services, and so our prayers might be accepted; of which that in *Isaiah 49.8.* is prophetically spoken, compared with 2 *Cor. 6. 2.* we may well expect that in our holy approaches and makings out to God for mercy, we come in a time of acceptance, since the Lord hath heard Christ bespeaking of it: if the Lord the rather honour the Lord Jesus, because in the days of his flesh he made intercession for Transgressours, *Isaiah 13. 12.* (therefore shall he divide the spoil, &c. because he did so) surely we may well expect the success thereof

of, and to share in those spoils, if wee are strong and earnest wrestlers with God in his name for the same. *Solomons* request for the grant of their prayers, in their several cases, which are mentioned *1 Kings* 8. and which are granted, *Chap. 9. 3.* were shadowing types of what the Lord will condescend to in all his suppliants cases, at the request of this our blessed *Solomon*, *Psalms* 72. but especially improve his present intercession and appearing before God for us now in Heaven, *Heb. 7. 25.* Look as whilst the people were praying without, the Priest was offering Incense within the Temple, *Luke* 1. 9, 10. So is Christ in that glorious Temple above appearing before God for us, whilst we are praying. That was a shadow of this, *Heb. 8. 5.* the Saints Prayers are committed to him there, as his charge, according to his Office to which the Lord hath appointed him, to offer them up with the Incense of his own meritorious sufferings, *Rev. 8. 1, 3.* they cannot then but succeed well. At that time when the Lord should be corporally absent from his Disciples, hee made account that was a special speeding time in their Prayers, *John* 16. 26, 27.

5. Contemplate and let your spirits dwell much upon these considerations.

1. What a futable name the Lord assumeth, and by his own dictate, writing and seal alloweth to be challenged; namely, A

5. Contemplation upon the eight following particulars  
1. Consider that God is a God hearing prayers.

God

God hearing Prayers, Psalm 65. 2. *Hearing prayer*, shewing it is his usual work, his constant exercise, his inseparable property: nor saith hee whose prayers, as excluding thine or the prayers of any other poor soul which in truth desire to seek him. It is recorded of *Augustus*, That he never sent away any Petitioner sad from him; and dost thou think, that the Lord of bowels, that *is rich in mercy to all that call upon him*, Psal. 86. 5. can or will?

2. Whose cries and prayers he doth hear.

2. To whose requests the Lord hath given (at least) some audience: even to the rude means of beasts and other dumb creatures, Psalm 145. 15, 16. *Job* 38. 41. And as Christ reasoneth thence, Luke 12. 14. *God feedeth the Ravens, and are not you much better then they?* So may I say here, God heareth the Ravens cries, will he not hear the Righteous cries? It is but Righteous, as well as an act of grace in him so to do. Psalm 145. 15, 16. *He filleth the desire of every living thing;* and ver. 17. *Is righteous in all his wayes.* No wonder then if as ver. 18, 19. *he be nigh unto all such as call upon him, to fulfil their desires.* The cries of meer natural men, as they are his creatures, and in helplesse conditions, look out to him for succor, as many rude mariners are so heard, Psalm 107. 23, 28. he will give some audience even to hypocrites prayers, Psalm 78. 34, 35, 36, 37, 38. and surely he that out of his overflowing bounty will hear (as far as he may)

such

such persons prayers, they shall have that benefit of his common audience and providence, albeit not of his peculiar and saving respects of grace. He is not unwilling to hear his peoples requests, when not so rightly principled, as that noble Jew, who would scarce believe without signes shewed, yet was so heard in his requests for his son, *Joh. 4. 48, to 53.* or if rightly, yet not so thoroughly principled as *Cornelius*, who yet was not so cleared in that great Article of faith then in question, that that *Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah*: hence that *Acts 11. 13, 24.* with *Acts 10. 2, 3, 4, 5.* or if so principled, yet at present under much distemper of corruption; and yet when praying, even then God hath overlooked all that, and judged of them by their better part, and taken their prayers then made kindly. Such was *Dauids* secret prayer at that instant, when changing his behaviour, or favour, as if he had not been the man he was, yet accepted, *Psalms 34. title, with ver. 4.* Those that in their affliction are so distempered with infirmities of distrust or discontent, it may be that they cannot speak freely to God in prayer, but sigh; yet heard, *Rom. 8. 18, 26, 27.* *Moses* when in such a pet, yet the Lord picketh out what he would have craved, and granteth it, *Exod. 5. 22, 23.* compared with *chap. 6. 1.* and *Num. 11. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15* with *ver. 16, 17.* their cry was with much distemper, as appears by their words

words to *Moses*, *Exod.* 14. 10, 11 yet heard and granted; and God the rather shewed all those after-signs and wonders on the *Egyptians*, in answer even to that distempered cry to him by the *Israelites*, many whereof were truly godly: see *Nehemiah* 9. 2, 3. haling *Jacob*, yet wrestling in his prayer though lamely, is heard: yea when too curious in his inquiry, *Gen.* 32. 28, 29. yet blessed in regard of his praier before. Spacious of grace amongst an heap of ashes are acceptable.

3. What kind of prayers hee heareth.

3. Consider what kind of prayers have been found special acceptance with God: Some as have been rather sighs and groans, the expresse praiers; *he heares the prisoners groan* *Psal.* 102. 20. the *needies sighs*, *Psal.* 12. Such as have been but Ejaculatory lifting up of the soul unto God in mental desire *Psalms* 145. 18, 19. *Jonah* 2. 1. Such as have been but a poor chattering and muttering of something in the ears of God, *Isaiah* 5, 14. Such which have been but an abrupt and broken expression or two from a troubled spirit, as the contrite *Publican* *Be propitious to me a sinner*, *Luke* 18. 15. The converted Thief's, *Lord remember mee thy kingdom*, *Luke* 23. 42, 43. but a long looking of the body and soul towards God; *They looked to thee & were not ashamed*, *Psa.* 34. 4. And *Jonahs* look towards God in Christ, *ped by the Temple*, *Jonah* 2. 4, 7. that to well with God; yea Prayers of the Saints



dream, as was that of *Solomons*, have found good acceptance, *1 Kings* 3.5,9,10,11,12. after that *Solomon* awoke, ver. 15. Not that any should think it enough to sigh or groan, and not utter their souls in words to the Lord; but if, like the *Shunamite*, the soul of any be troubled within them, that they cannot utter their hearts, *2 Kings* 4.27. or like *David*, so troubled in spirit that they cannot speak, *Psal.* 77. then it is comfortable to consider, that yet in such cases sighs are successful. Neither may any abuse what we said of the Publican & the converted thief, and to content themselves to speak some few words constantly, and there rest as if all were well: no, but if we are younglings in Christianity, babes in Christ, know that our heavenly Father also, (as other fathers do in theirs) he delighteth as much, and sometimes more, in the broken language and lisping of his little ones, and of his sick ones, though elder, in prayers, craving this or that in their broken fashion, and rather making signes for what they would have, then able full yand plainly to express their minde to him; then he doth in the more fluent expressions of sundry others; not but that he useth in his owne season to inable such stammerers also to speak more plainly, *Isai.* 32.4.

4. Consider what account God doth <sup>4.</sup> Consider what esteem  
make of his people: they are his *choice al-* God hath of  
*lowed Suppliants*, *Zeph.* 3. 10 his *royal* Prayer.  
T Priests,

*Priests*, 1 Pet. 2.9. persons sequestrated for such holy ends. *Psalms* 4.3. *Zach.* 13.9. his *beloved ones*. Hence that strong expression of Christ, encouraging to expect hearing of our prayers, *I say not that I will pray to the Father for you*, (namely, as now whilst on earth) *for the Father himself loveth you*, John 10.26,27. as if that were that strong motive, which will farther his gracious audience of his servants Prayers. What will not love grant?

What esteem  
he hath of his  
Saints prayers.

*What he saith*

5. Consider what account the Lord makes of his peoples prayers. They are his *delights* *Prov.* 15.8. as *sweet musick in his eares*, *Rev.* 5.1. They are memorials before him, ever in his eye, minding him of what is meet to be done for his People, *Act.* 10.4. They are as a *Recompence to him*, he liketh to be paid in his dues in prayer also. *Psalms* 116.12,13. he thinketh we never *pray enough*, John 16.13,14. *Hitherto you have asked nothing*, (namely, in comparison) *open thy mouth wide*. *Psalms* 81. Mercy accompanieth prayer; if the Lord would turne away the *ones*, yet not the others pleas, *Psalms* 66.20.

6. What measures he keepeth in his respects to prayer.

6. Consider what measures the Lord keepeth in his respects to prayer: He heareth sometimes before we call; *preventeth his people with goodnesse*, *Isaiah* 65.24. Sometimes even whilst praying they have answer of grace, *ibid.* Sometimes when his people seek him for pardoning grace, and the manifestation

nifestation thereof, he sheweth mercy even above their thoughts, *Isaiah 55. 6, 7, 8, 9.* giveth them, as above what they ask, so beyond their thoughts and expectations, *Eph. 3. 20.* Wherefore raise up our expectations in this way of seeking the face of God, touching his gracious disposition to hear and help us; and when we have got up our thoughts therein to the highest, yet believe it, he hath mercy and answers of grace for us above our thoughts.

7. Consider what method God continually and infallibly useth in his respects to prayer: namely, first to encline hearts to be cordial and serious in Prayer, and then to give his promised mercies, *Psalms 10. 17. Jerem. 29. 11, 12.* The nearer and surer mercies are, the more praying motions and workings there are then in our hearts. Both are to the same mercy, as one works to help to pray, and to hear prayer. Mercy would not be at work with us in the one, if the other part of God's mercies were not to be effected.

Lastly, That we may clear up our fainting spirits and drooping hearts, in expectation of Faith, that our Prayers shall not fail of good successe from God, consider of that Parable of our Lord Jesus, which he for this purpose propoundeth *Luke 18. 1 ad 9.* A Judg, a man, comes off to hear a poor suppliant's request; and will not God, a Father, do much more for his? An unjust Judg hears,

7. What method he observeth in his respects to prayer.

8. Consider the Parable *Luke 18. 1 to 9.*

and will not a just and righteous God hear the cries of his poor ones? One that was a hater and disregarder of men, and of his own name, yet hears; and will not God and Christ hear, whose delight is to be with men? *Prov. 8.* One that was utterly averse from hearing, [*He would not hear :*] one to whom asking was a trouble [*This widow troubleth me*] yet at length grants the request of her which sought to him: How much more will the Lord, to whom prayer is a delight, and whose property it is to be hearing, (even ready to hear) prayers! surely he will hearken to his suppliants requests much more. One that while he denyed and delayed his Petitioner, considered it not till afterward [*Then he considered with himself,*] and he cometh off: How much rather will the Lord, who wisely weigheth all circumstances & inconveniences in case of too long delay to hear? *Isai. 57. 17.* He will surely fulfil his peoples desires. One that in granting his Petitioners desire, merely to avoid disquiet, (*Lest she should weary him out with her out-cries*) he hearkens; and will not God, who delighteth in mercy, do much more for his precious ones? One that is solicited by (a certain widow) one no way allyed to him, (coming to him without any other intercessour to plead her cause) yet he cannot deny her Petition: and can or will the Lord deny his own dear children, which come to him in the name of him in whom

whom he is well pleased ; yea , and have the Lord himself to intercede for him ?

Touching the last thing propounded, very briefly. The marks of one praying in faith are these. Marks of praying in faith.

1. When a soul is born up , and carry- 1. Praying amidst discouragements to pray. If he pray without ceasing, when yet there are so many things sometimes which may seem to occasion ceasing to pray, save that he prayeth in faith. When we are hindred and opposed in it by Satan and others , yet a *Joshua* stands before the Angel notwithstanding Satans resistance, *Zach. 3. 1.* or like him in *Mark 10. 47, 48, 51, 52.* we continue crying, *Jesus have mercy on us*, even when others would forbid us : when we are delayed and held off from our desired answers , and left in some deeps of affliction in the interim , and yet trusting in the Lord in prayer ; *We will wait, Psalm 136. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* When the Lord is long silent , yet we will not be silent , but plead, *How long Lord? Psalm 13. 1, 2.* When denied of God as the woman of *Canaan* , as if we had no part in the mercy we ask , it were not for us, yet we continue asking, *Matth. 25. 25, 26, 27.* Surely there is faith emboldning thereunto , *verse 28.* When we seem to be curbed and silently rebuked , as the friend wished not to trouble his friend, yet will not give over his suite , *Luke 11.*



Surely he thinks he speaks to a friend within, or else he could not, would not then continue asking.

2. Praying  
with boldness.

2. When we pray with some more than usual boldness and liberty of speech, as sometimes in an awful and spiritual manner, we are wondrous free to plead with God, more than at other times, now is faith stirring in such a Prayer, *1 John 3. 21, 22. Eph. 3. 12.*

3. Praying  
with heart  
calmness.

3. When we pray with a kind of delightful calmness and stillness of spirit, not tossed like waves in prayer, through the power of unbelief, *Jam. 1. 6.*

4. Prayers turned  
into praises.

4. When in setting our selves sometimes to pray to the Lord, and petition him, we are even ready to make a holy digression and diversion, and turning our intended Petition into melting, admiring praises of God; as oft times spiritual Christians have experiences thereof; surely then faith is stirring. So Christ turning himself to approach to God, *John 11. 41, 42.* saith, *I thank thee Father, ——— that thou always hearest me.*

## CHAP. V.

*of Humility required in Prayer.*

**W**E have entred upon the discourse of things propounded touching the conditions required for the incessant performance of the duty of prayer, and have dispatched the first, namely, Faith. And now we are to speak of the second condition thereto required, and that is Humility. *It is the desire of the humble which the Lord heareth, Psal. 10. 17. and his people that pray are to humble themselves, and then the Lord promiseth them hearing. 2 Chron. 7. 14.* But for our better proceeding in handling of this condition of prayer, Let us consider, Humility in prayer consisteth,

1. Wherein that Humility which is required in prayer doth consist?
2. When Humility expressed in prayer may be discerned to be saving?
3. Why this Humility is required to prayer?
4. What are useful helps and means furthering such humility in prayer?

To the first, we say, Humility required in prayer consisteth in these six or seven things.

1. In low thoughts of our selves to attempt or set about such a duty. When we are going about it, we judge our selves most 1. In low thoughts of our selves as unmeet to pray.

unmeet and unworthy in our selves to speak to the Lord; as we are imployed in praying, still the serious and sensible thoughts of our own worthlesnesse dwells with us, and works on us. That justified suppliant mentioned, *Luke 13. 13, 14.* standeth afar off, and would scarce lift up his eyes to heaven, he thinks he is not worthy to come nearer: let others go as high as they please; as for himself, hee will take the lowest room in Gods house. It is more then he is worthy of, to be admitted to come there at all, and heaven is too glorious a place in a manner for him, a wretch as hee hath been to be so bold; he hath sinned against heaven, it is better for him to look on the dust, yea, to kisse and lick the dust. In the words which the wiseman speaketh prayer-wise unto Christ (that *It heil*, he that was his God, and that *Ucall*, that mighty one,) *Prov. 30. 1, 7, 8, 9.* you see how humbly hee prefaceth in his speech (so far as directed to him in way of prayer) as *verse 2, 3.* hee professeth he is more brutish then any man, and hath not the understanding of a man; so unfit and unworthy doth he see himself, to speak either of Christ in an instructive way, as *verse 4, 5, 6.* or to Christ in a supplicating way, *ver. 7, 8, 9.* The Disciples having been at praier with Christ, they see so much weight in the duty, and so much excellency in the due exercise of the gift and grace of Christ in prayer, that they look

at themselves as most unfit to pray as they ought, and therefore intreat his help and direction, *Lord teach us to pray. Luke 11.*

1. The Psalmist beginneth his prayer in a kind of expostulation with God, *Psal. 22.* 1, 2. and pressing of God with examples of his mercy to others in like cases, *verse 4, 5.* But if thou think he is too bold with God, and keepeth not his due distance, hee will professe that for his own part, *he is a worm and no man, verse 6.* 7. he judgeth himself, as infinitely unworthy to stand upon terms with God, so even unfit to make comparison with others *verse 5, 6.* *But I am a worm, and no man:* whatever our fathers were, yet I look at my self, as fitter to creep on the earth, and feed onely upon the dust, in respect of the guilt of sinne laid upon me, (for if you apply it to Christ the antitype, God *laid upon him the iniquity of us all, Isai. 53.* 6. but we intend it of the Psalmist rather himself:) then as a man to lift up my self to heaven; and therefore am justly made the reproach of men, *ibid.* No sooner do the Saints essay to draw neer unto God, but the beames of the glory of God reflect upon the faces of their souls, which do thus awe and abase them; they see in the glasse of that excellency their own vilenesse.

2. In abased thoughts of our selves when we do get any thing of the Lord by prayer. True it is, humble ones do speed best of all others in prayer: but yet, as mercies

2. In low thoughts of our selves when heard.

eyes of prayer found them, so they leave them humble. When *Abraham* hath gained upon the Lord by prayer, *Gen. 18. 26.* yet then, nay then especially is *Abraham* lowly and vilest in his own esteeme; then *verse 27.* he saith, and seeth *he is dust and ashes*. He then considereth what he is in himself, whence he came, and whither he must, notwithstanding the favour which hee findeth with the Lord; he knoweth no cause which should move the Lord to give any answer of mercy to so meane an one as himself, by his rich grace, (What is in dust to move respects in God to it?) and secretly presenteth it as a plea to continue such undeserved mercy to such an one, from that which moved the Lord to begin to respect in prayer. Thus *David Psal. 34. 4* when he had gained by his prayer, and God was found of him, yet *verse 6.* hee putteth a humble Emphasis upon the matter, *this poor man cryed.* That *they, verse 5.* (even better men then he, such as had walked worthy of God, and of his grace,) looked unto the Lord in prayer, and were encouraged by answers of favor, was no wonder; but that *this poor man*, that he poor wretch, as he esteemeth himself, one that (as in the title of the Psalm) saith, *he changed his favour and was not like himself*, in that case at *Gath, 1 Sam. 21. 13.* yet he to cry unto the Lord, and be heard, this is a wonder of grace to him, After *Ephraim* hath prayed for turning



from God, *Jer. 31. 18.* and is answered, *v. 19.*  
 then is he abased, yea more abased in his  
 own sight then before. When the Church at  
 her request is drawn unto her beloved, *Cant.*  
*1. 4.* then she cryeth out of her blacknesse,  
*verse 5.* Humblest Christians are the found-  
 dest and healthiest in spirit; and as shewes  
 and blasts of affliction and temptation do  
 not much annoy them, so neither do war-  
 ming gleames and shines of mercy distem-  
 per them, still they are humble; they are  
 square men, nothing comes amisse to them,  
 they will fall right which way ever they are  
 cast, if lowly. Look as vessels whose sayls  
 are filled, if well ballasted, they run a more  
 steady course; so is it here with the Saints,  
 when they pray with full sayled joy of faith:  
 yet when this holy ballast of humility is in  
 the hold of the heart, and not meerly aloft  
 in shew above decks, appearing to men;  
 they are not soon lifted up with every good  
 successe they meet with, but keep low, and  
 deep, and carry it evenly with the Lord, as  
 humbly, if not more humbly then before.  
 The Saints know well they are but beggers,  
 and stand in need of much; they prayse not  
 their good prayers, but their good Master  
 for the almes of grace which they get: *Not*  
*unto us,* and because once was too little to  
 set forth their own unworthinesse of any  
 mercy, they repeat it againe, *not unto us,*  
*but to thy name give glory, &c. Psal. 115. 1.*  
 Little cause to be proud of a trade or art of  
 such

such holy begging, albeit through the bounty of God it proves gainful.

3. In affectionate amplifications of our own vileneſſe, and of Gods grace.

3. In affectionate amplifications of our own vileneſſe, and Gods mercy and excellency. As beggars which use to make very lamentable relations of their own miseries, but yet giving their benefactors their titles to the full: So those in *Psalm 115. 1.* ingeminate the expression of their own utter unworthineſſe. *Not unto us, not unto us.* And the Publican in his prayer speaks of himself, as a sinner, none such a one as he, *Luke 18. 13, 14.* So the Prodigal in his request to his father, acknowledgeth his extream and unparalleled sinne, and unworthineſſe. *Luke 15. 19.* So those converts *Jer. 31. 18, 19.* the like: such like amplifications being as many forcible arguments in their prayer with themselves, to further compunction and contrition in them; and with God, further their participation of the benefit of his compassions. Out of the abundance of heart-abasement the mouth speaks. Pride is large in speaking for selfe, but humility in declaring against self.

4. In framing all our Petitions *formâ pauperum.*

4. In framing all our pleas in our petitions *formâ pauperum*, in the manner of undone persons; and pleading for mercy in regard of our extream misery. That we are under woful captivity and oppression, not of Turks, and such-like, but even of spiritual enemies of our souls, corruptions of nature.

nature, temptations of Satan, &c. which are far more grievous. That we have sustained losses in soul that are almost irreparable, lost the goodly patrimony in our first parents of Gods favour and image, which never can be sufficiently bewailed; yea happily have lost that little light, and life, and comfort of grace, through some ill course we took since the Lord set us up againe, and trusted us with a new stock of grace; yea, are strangely runne behind hand with God; yea, we are extreame in debt by our sinne to divine justice; yea, we are afflicted with many spiritual diseases and distempers, and sorely wounded in our spirits, through some sad foils of the enemies of our soules, and in all wee are utterly insufficient to recover our selves, yea, and helpelesse, and shiftelesse, in the very use of such means as might tend thereunto. Wee see indeed, that if we could believe, that would succour us, but yet are not able; if wee could so earnestly wrestle for, and breath after help of God in Christ, we might have relief; but see also that of our selves wee cannot do so much, but as wee are able through the might of God. Wee tell him of our grievances, and plead our miseries, and spread them before him, and his people, if they may move to mercy, and so wait his gracious leisure for the same. *Jeremiah* pleads for mercy to him and his people, because *their back-slidings were many.* *Jer.*

14.7. *David* pleads for pardon because his sin is great, *Psalms* 25. 11. and craves mercy because a poor shiftlesse stranger and sadly gone to decay, *Psal.* 39. 12, 13. *Psal.* 38. 1, 2. intreateth the Lord to forbear to go on to afflict him, because his arrow stick fast in him; he is sorely wounded already, v. 2. he is sick in body and spirit. ver. 3. he is already fallen under a burden that is heavy for him, ver. 4 and ver. 6. his back already ready to crack under his pressure and so on with such like sad pleas taken from his forlorn condition, he presseth God for mercy in that Psalm.

3. In heart  
brokenness  
therein.

5. In much inward brokenness and rentings of spirit. Hence that smiting upon the breast in the *Publicans* prayer, *Luk.* 18. 13. There, there lay his sin and misery, there was his wound and burden; little did men think what he felt and saw. Ah that breast of flesh how had it harboured rebellion formerly against God! his heart within was smiting for it, whereof his breast smiting was but shadow. *Psal.* 51. 17. *A broken and contrite spirit* is the all of his Sacrifice in prayer. Surely that heart is low in prayer and brought down to the dust, which is broken as it were to dust. Whatever speaks humble ones have in prayer, it is sure they have sighes attending. If the *Dove-like* Spirit of Christ breaths in them, they will be breathing out Dove-like moanes and groans in the ears of God. The Psalm speaks

speareth not so much of Gods hearing of the words of the humble, as the desires; *he beareth the desire of the humble*: If they do fall short at any time through some occasional impediments of expressions, yet broken hearted desires, expressed in groans are present and stirring, and they are to God as prayers, *Psal. 10. 17. The groanings of the prisoners are the prayers of the afflicted and destitute, Psal. 102. 17, 20.* in Gods account.

6. In a meek and quiet submission, and bearing all discouragements without quarrelling against God, nay, awfully clearing the Lord therein. If rated like beggars, if rebuked, if upbraided, if delayed, if denied, yet putting up all contentedly. The reproachful name of a dog moveth not the humble suppliant; she taketh it very well, and maketh good use of it, and doth not mutiny against the Lord Jesus for it, *Mat. 15. 27.* They in *Judges 10.* hear and bear, and take all that well, which the Lord in a holy upbraiding way speaketh. *Judges 10. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.* They yeild to all, as so, and just, if worse with them from the hands of God then it is: but yet with the leave of his mercy, they crave his favourable acceptance of their request, *ibid.* If humble ones come to Christ in prayer or otherwise, surely they come with holy dispositions to stoop to any yoke and burden of Christ, which he will lay upon them, as well as desire to have their own burdens taken off

6. In a quiet submitting to the Lord amidst discouragements,



off by him, *Matth. 11. 28, 29.* They may indeed plead with God, why he carryeth it so towards them: as *Psal. 22. 1, 2.* but they are clear in it, that he cannot but carry it well, albeit the particular cause they know not: So *Psal. 22. 3.* But thou art holy and however it cometh about, that such divine forsakings are occasioned, yet still thou art holy and spotlesse, and pure in all thy dispensations.

7. In a real preferring others prayers before ones own.

7. In a real preferring others prayers before our own. Thus the humble Centurion in his request he had to make to the Lord Jesus, he thought better of the Jews praies then of his own, as being in his own sight most unworthy Gentile, *Luke 7. 3, 7.* Not that under this pretence men should in way of voluntary humility repair to deceased Saints, that is idolatrous humility; yea even the madnesse of persons then living. So *Hezekiah* preferreth *Isaiahs* prayer before his own, and therefore sends solemnely to him to lift up his prayer in the case of *Jehoiakim*, *Isaiah 37. 1, 2, 3, 4.* So the Church preferreth the praies even of her young daughters (not so well instructed as her self) before her own, in that *Cant. 5. 8.* And the Psalmist reckoneth the prayers of his fathers as far more excellent then his, *Psal. 22. 2, 5, 6.* And the like did *David* in comparing his own prayers with others, *Psal. 24. 5, 6.* True it is, Pride and Hypocrisie will counterfeit this, as they that preferred

*Jeremiahs*

Jeremiahs prayer before their own, and therefore so earnestly do seem to desire it, *Jerem. 24. 2.* and the proud false hearted *Simon Magus* doth the like in regard of *Peters* prayers, *Acts 8. 24.* But this was but an extorted act, wrested from horror of heart: and others in a complemental way, and for fashions sake, or that they might seem to be humble persons may carry it thus too; but it is not in-wrought in their spirits.

Touching the second, When humility in prayer may be called saving? Marks of humility in prayer, as saving.

I answer, first *Negatively*, and then *Affirmatively*.

1. *Negatively.* 1. That expression of Humility is not alwayes saving, when a person questioning the worth and validity of his own prayers, doth desire the benefit of others prayers; for then that act of *Pharaoh* in desiring *Moses* prayers, and *Jeroboam* the Prophets prayers (*1 King. 13. 6*) had been saving. 1. Not to desire others prayers.

Nor 2. Is that alwayes saving when one carryeth it so in prayer, as ascribing all to the Lord in what good he partaketh of. The unjustified Pharisee will in words attribute all to God, that *he is not as other men are, Extortioner, &c. Luke 18. 10, 14.* yet with a proud spirit disdaining others, which in his esteem are not so good as himself. 2. Not in words to ascribe all our good to the Lord.

Nor 3. Is that alwayes saving, when one is Lord. 3. Not to be afraid to come before the Lord.

is fearful to come to God in prayer, out of sense of great distance betwixt God and him, as the slothful servant which durst not trade thus with God in prayer, (as well as otherwise) *Luke 19. 21.* Or like him whom the fear of the Majesty, Word, Presence and Justice of God, as a King, striketh him speechlesse, *Matth. 22. 11.* hee cannot, dare not open his mouth to plead for his mercy.

4. Not meerly to make large confession of sin, or mournful complaints, to fast, to be of dejected countenance, to weep in prayer.

Nor 4. Is that alwayes saving, when any prayer doth expresse severall semblances of Humility : as when any is large in confession of their sin ; as many of those that are brought in as confessing their sin in such sort ; as *Isaiah 59. 12, 13.* yet few or none of them savingly interceding and pleading with God in prayer ; hence that wonder, that he found no Intercessour, *v. 26.* or when any utter before the Lord many sad complaints of themselves, and their misery, and that in a mournful manner : in their prayers in apperance they will roar like Beares and mourn sore as Doves, as sundry of those did mentioned, *Isai 59. 11, 16.* and such like were many of them that did not savingly complain or bewail their sins, albeit they did as *Ezek. 7. 16.* compared with the *17, 18, 19* and *chap. 8. 18.* Nor when persons set apart solemn days, and that frequently, for a more seemingly humble seeking of God in prayer, as that proud Pharisee and unjustified person did fast twice a week, *Luke*

18.12. Nor when sad countenances and dejected looks are adjoynd in such solemn times of prayer. There is an hypocritical affected sadnesse of countenance charged upon those false-hearted professors in their days of fasting and prayer, forbidden to sincere ones, *Matth. 6. 16.* No nor when teares and weepings are joynd to such prayers, are they always expressions of saving humility therein required: albeit some of those were sincere, yet surely some of that people which wept so sore, upon that confession of sins made, *Ezra 10. 1.* and in that solemn time wherein all *Israel* were gathered to *Mizpeh* to pray, *1 Sam. 7. 5.* and there even poured out waters, so abundantly did they weep on that fast-day, *ver. 6.* were not sincere therein, but many of them did it from common principles, and not saving.

2. I answer, *Affirmatively.* Humility expressed in prayer is then saving,

1. When a gracious Christian abaseth himself in prayer; and is not meerly abased: when he is a stirring agent, by the lively power of the graces of God in him to abase himself; he useth means, layeth many arguments together for that purpose, and not barely a Patient therein. Thus did the *publican* in his prayer, *he smote on his brest,* and that not to seem to be humbled; but one outward help to himself to be abased, *Luke 18. 13.* Hence the conclusion of Christ in

But 1. Self-abasement in prayer.

ference to the humble manner of seeking Gods face, *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* The *Pharisee* he layeth all such materials together in his prayer. *ver. 11, 12* as did rather tend to lift up his spirit, which was high enough in it self, and needed not such stirrups. When humility is wrought in prayer, as out of the fire, yea, gained out of much contrary opposition, a Christian finding his heart senselesse, unaffected, and unbroken, he taketh such pains with his heart in prayer, & wrestles so with God and his own spirit, that it relenteth, and melteth, and falleth before God. Thus did those of *Ephraim*, they cease not bemoaning themselves, and charging their stiff-neckednesse, and unbrokennesse so deeply upon themselves, and pressing the Lord for a more serious and through-bringing of their hearts to a relenting, repenting from *Jerem. 31. 18*, whilst that they prevail with God, and their own souls, and are more thoroughly abased, ashamed, and confounded in their own sight before the Lord, *v. 19.*

Howard holy  
name even to  
look God in  
the face.

2. When a Christian is in a holy wise ashamed before God in prayer, even much as to look him in the face. That humble *Publican* that was so ashamed in his prayer, in the sense of his extreme vileness and unworthinesse in himself, he is justified *Luke 18. 13, 14.* he thought earth and hell below were more suitable to his case and



serts, and the judgement of God there (and thence looketh down thitherwards) then heavens glory and grace. Thus that precious Suppliant *Ezra* in his prayer professeth, *he was ashamed, and blushed to lift up his face to heaven, Ezra 9.6.* Thus the *Publican*, and converted *Prodigal*, he is even ashamed to own the name of a sonne; to be called, or be as an hired servant is too good for him, he thinketh, and speaketh so in his prayer, *Luke 15.19.* The woman that came to Christ, she is even ashamed to come before him, to behold his blessed countenance, but standeth behind him. *Luke 7.38.* And she sped well in the desire of her soul, for the comfortable manifestation of her pardon, shee secretly sought for. Saith Christ, *verse 48, 50. Thy faith hath made thee whole.*

3. When a man in or upon his prayer is affected and awed with much holy trembling : thus that humble Suppliant in *Luke* 3 A holy awe in and after prayer.

*18.13. He is even afraid to lift up his eyes to heaven, durst not do it, such awful rayes in the glorious purity, majesty and excellency of the Lord did he behold by an eye of faith, and he is justified therein, verse 14.* That godly Prophet in his prayer, *Hab. 3. 1, 2.* and in the mention of divers things touching God his providence and proceedings, *his belly (he saith) trembled, and rottenesse entered into his bones, verse 17.* Thence that believing Centurion, after he

had sent to Christ to intreat his gracious presence, and coming for the help of his servant, as in a holy wise jealous of himself, and what he had done, whether he, so unworthy an one, had not made too hold with the Lord Jesus, to desire him to come under his roofe; he sendeth a second message, therein professing his unworthinesse that Christ should condescend so far to the desire of so unworthy an one as he judged himself to be, *Luk. 7. 3.* compared with *verse 6, 7.*

4. Greatest earnestnesse in begging pardon of sin, the benefit of Christs righteousness, &c.

4. When a man in prayer is much in begging pardon of sinne, and the reconciliation of his soul to God in Jesus Christ. Thus the Publican, justified in that way of prayer mentioned, *Luke 18.* the maine and in a manner only matter of his desires was, that God would *be propitious to him a sinner*; for so the Greek word signifies, or be reconciled to him, and have mercy on him, in covering all his sinnes in Christ: the favour and mercy of God in Christ Jesus, as a propitiation for sinnes, is all in all with him. When a child of God is in great afflictions of outward as well as inward man, yet the favourable remembrances, and merciful respects of Christ to a poor converted sinner, even in tortures, it is all in all. The converted thiefe desireth not to be saved or exempted from any justly deserved censures of God or man, but onely favour with Jesus Christ. *Luke 23. 39, 41. 42.* The other wretch was all for his own ease, and

and for to continue in the world; he careth not for the favour of Christ, as sometimes the Psalmist did, *Psal. 63. 1, 3.* The loving kindnesse of God in any condition is better then life; to live in the love and favour of Christ, is more then ten thousand lives to him: yea, so the Lord will be merciful to him in the maine of his soul, hee careth not what becomes of his bodily life, when called to sacrifice the same. An humble child that cryeth out when he is whipped, yet careth more for his fathers favour, then is troubled about his whipping.

5. When a Suppliant of God doth not propound to him in his prayer matters too high for him, things that are above his reach, or his measure, or his condition, or his calling, or the present necessity whereof he is sensible; but he will be glad of smallest mercy, childrens crummes; yea, such as are to others refuse, despicable blessings, are in high esteeme with him in his desires: crummes that fall from the childrens table she craveth in *Matth. 15. 26.* and is accepted and approved in the manner of her praying, *verse 28.* Some children it may bee will scorne to have onely bread for their food in the fathers house; but the humble Prodigal in his penitent motion which hee meaneth to make to his father, will bee glad of that, yea of the coursest of the household-bread and fare in the house, hirelings bread,

5. Praising of the least degrees or portion of mercy.

yea hee would be glad to have of the refuse, and leavings, and spare even of hirelings bread. *Luke 15. 17.* *Make mee as one of thy hired servants*, namely, in their allowances, as well as services; as one of them, albeit as the meanest kitchin-boy, (as it were) the poorest, most despised cutter of wood, and drawer of water, &c. Beggars ask but a piece of dry-bread, a cup of small beer, or water; any old-cast clothes, and the like mercies and blessings in God his house, which others, it may be, account too slightly of, these humble suppliants will highly prize, and earnestly crave of the Lord: & whatsoever they press after in spiritual blessings in Christ, yet in temporals they use to be very modest; neither poverty, nor riches, but *Lechem Chukki*, the bread of his portion, & dimension, that is the matter of humble *Agars* prayer, *Prov. 30. 7, 8.* So *Jacob*, if God, or (prayer-wise,) *O that God would, give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on.* *Gen. 28. 20.* In spirituals indeed they are still more needy, and craving, hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is their most ordinary usual and continual daily desire, like hunger and thirst, the ordinary and daily afflictions in the body, *Matth. 5. 6.*

6 An acknowledgement of greatest love in smallest mercies.

6. When a Christian amidst all vilifications of himself in prayer, is ready to entreat the Lord, and to acknowledge much love and mercy of God, even in the smallest fruits and benefits thereof: whatsoever

flowe

stout vagrants and bedlams do, which will disdainfully cast scraps at their feet, yet poor hunger-bitten beggars will not do so, but be very thankful for smallest courtesies. So it is here, the guiding of a faithful *Eleazar* in his way, will make him bow his head in way of thankfulnesse to the Lord, that so graciously answered his prayer therein, *Gen. 24.48.* O how will Gods humble suppliants exalt and magnifie the Lord for blessings of a meaner nature, even temporal as well as spiritual blessings! as *David* for promised blessings to his house, cryeth out, *Who am I, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 2 Sam. 7.18, &c. and 1 Chron. 24.11, 12, 13, 15, 16.* He exceedingly amplifieth the kindnesse of God to him and his people, even in regard of temporal blessings; hee wonders at the greatnesse of God his mercy to him and them, even therein, *ibidem* verse 14, 15. And when such of God his Suppliants do not fare so well at the doore of mercy, as they could desire, and as sometimes they have done, yet they will not go away muttering, but even then will speake well of God, and grace, and mercy, and the covenant and way of God, &c. The Psalmist, in *Pf. 89.49.* cryeth out, *Lord where are thy former loving kindnesses?* yet concludeth, (*verse 52.*) thankfully, notwithstanding all the sad passages of providence before mentioned, *Blessed be the Lord for evermore, Amen, and Amen.*

7. When



7. Looking  
through all  
our meltings  
unto meere  
Grace for  
the successe,

7. When a Suppliant having prayed pathetically, with much fervency and brokennesse of heart, yet as one who seeth the emptinesse of his prayer, even at the beginning he goeth out of that, resteth not therein but as if he had not prayed in such sort, he runneth to the Name of the Lord, he looketh for nothing, but from the rich and free grace of God in the Lord Jesus, as Daniel Ch. 9. 3, 4. He is at it with God in such like humble prostrating his soules desires unto him, but in the close professeth the supplications which were presented, (though with much brokennesse of heart doubtlesse) were not for any righteousness of their own, (whether of person, or performances of prayers) but for *his mercies sake*, v. 1. And ver. 17. desireth audience for *the Lords sake*, and *Christs sake*. And ver. 19. for *his name sake* so Ezra, albeit he had been weeping and casting himself down before God in prayer, Ch. 10. 1. ch. 9. last, he concludeth, that *he and the people in respect of themselves, are before God in their trespasses, and cannot stand before him, by reason of the breach of covenant with God, which he had then bewayled.* verse 14.

Humility  
required in  
prayer, because  
1. Humble  
prayers speed  
best.

Now touching the third thing proposed, why this humility in prayer is required I answer briefly;

1. Because prayers put up in and with such humility, they do ever speed better. *Mark 7. 29. For this saying, go thy way, the devill is gone out of thy daughter: for what sayings*

laying? namely, that *verse* 26. wherein she taketh the name of a dog so quietly, and meekly, & craveth the very portion of dogs in a manner, the mercies slighted by the children: The Lord will not look at what the proud bring to him, but hath respect to the lowly, to strengthen them with grace and peace in their souls, *Psal.* 138. 3, 6. to perfect all that concerns them; *verse* 8. The lowly strangers see how the Lord welcomes them in prayer, *Isa.* 56. *vers.* 6, 7. The penitent Prodigal that speaks in such a vilifying way of himself to God his father, *Luke* 15. 18, 19. sees how royally & richly he is entertained by the Lord, like as by that father, *verse* 22, 23. the costliest robes of grace, and delicatest of mercy in Christ, are readily brought forth to such; greatest mercies are granted to such, as pardon of sinne, and the like. *Luke* 18. 13, 14. Yea, in such a lively and convincing manner exhibited, as that they shall carry it home with them, the sight and light thereof shall stick by them; *he went home Justified*: they shall in a holy triumphant wise carry home the garland of grace and peace for which they wrestled with God in prayer; whereas in defect of humilicy, no prayers nor tears of a proud *Esau* shall avail, *Heb.* 12. 17. The Pharisees repair so diligently to pray to the temple is to little purpose, whilst he doth not humble, but rather exalt himself therein, *Luke* 18. 10, 14. God will not approve of

of any such mens persons, or prayers, and such a non-justified estate is a sad abasing of such, *ibid.* as the gracious acceptance of the persons and prayers of humble ones in Christ Jesus, is an high degree of honour and exalting to them.

2 Then are  
humble ones  
themselves.

2. Because the servants of God are never more themselves, as such, then when humble in a way of seeking the face of God. When the converted Prodigal, and Publican cometh to rights, to himself, then in that frame, hee betaketh himself to the work, *Luke 15:17, 18, 19.* Assuredly, penitent dispositions work then strongly, zealous and holy indignation against sinne, and ourselves for it, are then stirring, then is faith and love doubtlesse active, and putting forth themselves in our souls.

3 It putteth  
most honour  
upon God and  
Christ.

3. Because an humble frame of heart in prayer putteth most honour upon God and Christ, and mercy, and grace, as all men all. *Agar* in that frame thinketh that will put the largest heads, and ripest wits in the world to it, to conceive or express the glory of God in Christ. *Proverb. 30:18.* 3. compared with the 4th. and he will magnifie the purity, perfection, and stability of his word, *verse 5.* see *verse 1, 7, 8, 9.* *Asaph* when in that frame of heart, *Psal. 73:22.* then who but the Lord of heaven and earth with him, and in his desire! *verse 25.* and if such a poor soul get any mercy by prayer, of all others hee will use it best, and give God

God the most glory of it, and for it, as might be shewed in divers instances.

4. Because such a kinde of spirit in prayer it doth fit us most for the mercies of prayer. Hence it is compared to *hunger*, which as it is good sawce to the body, and prepareth it well for its meat, so doth it fit the soul for its desired food of grace and mercy. Hence is that opposition *Luke 1. 53.* betwixt the *hungry and the rich*, and yet rich is rather opposed to poor, because indeed the poorest in spirit, the beggars in spirit are the most hungry. Look as the emptying of a vessel fitteth it for being filled with precious liquour; so humility by emptying the heart of all self-strength, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-righteousnesse, self-willednesse, and self-conceit, it fitteth the soul in prayer, for what it doth pray for. The heart of the humble is a prepared heart; as to pray to God, so likewise to receive and improve the mercies which it seeketh in prayer; such an one is most flexible and ready both to use the best meanes to obtain the mercies desired, and to walk worthy of them when obtained: So *Job 7. 20.* *I have sinned, what shall I do to thee, O thou Preserver of men?*

1. It fitteth us most for mercy.

As touching the last thing propounded; namely what Helps and Meanes we should use to further such Humility required in prayer? I answer,

Helps to Humility in prayer.

1. Set

1. Faith in the Lord.

1. Set faith on work, as we shewed at large the last Lecture. Faith in Gods Promise and Providence made *David* pray so humbly, as one not worthy to speak more to God, or receive more from him. *2 Sam. 7. 18, 19, 27.* That made the *Prodigal* to throw down himself in such sort, and humbly to seek his fathers favour, considering in him a fathers bowels, yea, which possibly might move towards him; he is apprehensive likewise that hee hath all he needeth, and that he moveth and furthereth him therein, *Luke 15. 17, 18, 19.* So is here, the Publicans faith in that propitiatory merit and mercy, causeth him so to speak as *Luke 18. 13.* It was faith that led the woman a begging, in that humble and lowly, as well as earnest manner, *Matt. 15. 26, 27, 28.* The faith of that woman was the instrumental means of her salvation. *Luke 7 50.* that was the means of that her silent, humble approach to the Lord, *ver. 38.* It is faith which taketh a true measure both of God and of our selves, and thereby furthereth such humility.

2. Love to the Lord.

2. Get our hearts filled with love to the Lord. Love is a stooping grace, it will make a Christian think meanly of all he saith or doth in behalf of Christ whom he loveth, that he never speaketh nor doth enough for him. Love will make a man amplify his worth and excellency, and glory, and even be speaking well, even the best of him; and that



that will surely make him carry it submissively to him, as very loth to displease or dishonour him; and when at any time a Christian wrongeth or offendeth the Lord, Oh how will love occasion self-loathing and displeasure, and distaste, and trouble for it! The Lord Jesus in giving that answer in that poor womans hearing, *Luke 7. 47.* *Her sins which are many, are forgiven her; for she loved much;* sheweth, that love also set her on work in such humble and melting sort, to expresse the secret desires of her soul unto him, touching the conserving and clearing of her Justification, *vers. 38.*

3. Be we sincere in heart in our prayers <sup>3. Sincerity.</sup> which we make. The sincere hearted *Publican* will humble himself in seeking of Gods favour by Prayer, when the leaven of hypocrisy will heave and puff up that *Pharisee* whilst he is praying, *Luke 18.* Sincerity will make us in prayer speak all freely and ingenuously on the part of God and Christ, in way of good; and on our own part, in way of our evil and emptiness; it will make men of yielding and flexible tempers, and cause persons to be open and plain hearted with the Lord; and that they shall not refuse or be unwilling to take any shame before God.

4. Improve we the thoughts and serious <sup>4 Thoughts of our need, and Gods greatness.</sup> considerations of our needy conditions, as likewise of the greatnesse of God The Saints

Saints are stiled such as *beggars in spirit*. *Matth. 5. 3. hungry*, vers. 6. *Luke 1. 53. Destitute ones*, *Plal. 102. 17.* such as whose best habiliments are rags, *Isaiah 64. 6. Cloves*, *vessels, the Lord our potter*, vers. 8. *Dauid Gen. 18. 27.* and such-like: the consideration whereof kept those Saints of God, *Abraham* and the rest, humble in their prayers. When we look at this ragged condition of ours, it will make us remember ourselves, and keep us humble in our Supplications.

5 Thoughts of  
our Ancestors  
sins.

5. Spread we much our own and Ancestors sins before the Lord when we are pray. And thus did *Daniel, chap. 9.* thus did *Ezra, chap. 9.* The very serious meditation and meditation of an offence of a child of God against his Father, will make a regenerate nature begin to work, and there will issue such holy blushes in the face of an ingenuous Christian. If through the assaults of Satan, and our deceitful hearts we should begin to gaze on our goodly fellows, and have some risings of spirit in us of pride, yet at the sight of this black face of ours, we should then assuredly fall in our spirits.

6. Taking advantage of  
melting workings in  
ourselves.

6. Take we all holy advantages of our melting weeping plights, in which we are sometimes above others. *Dauid's* heart being in that humble plight upon occasion of a good word of the Prophet, sent to him from God, then *David* goeth in and prout

eth, and then he carrieth it so humbly,  
2 Sam. 7. 18. 19. &c. When Ezra upon  
the hearing of the evils among them, was  
put into that abased frame, Ezra 9. 3. then  
he falleth into that humble sort to pray be-  
fore the Lord, vers. 5, 6, &c. So whilst Ne-  
hemiah's heart was even broken at the pre-  
sent hearing of the sad news, he forthwith  
setteth himself in solemn wise to pray and  
weep before the Lord, Nehem. 1. 2, 3. com-  
pared with vers. 4, 5, &c. Albeit, such mel-  
ting desires and inclinations should haply  
be raised from other causes, or spiritual  
miseries, yet being stirring already, they  
may the better be spiritualized. There are  
times when we are so strangely stupified,  
that scarce any thing will affect us: but  
when affected seriously with any thing, (it is an  
advantage (if improved wisely) to turn such  
waters, (the sluices being now opened) into the  
right chanel.

7. In our secret approaches to the Lord, spend some time in serious premeditations: it will help to put us into a more serious frame of Spirit, and that is the next Neighbour to an humble and sensible plight. It will add plummets to fleet, lofty Spirits; especially, if we seriously consider of his Majesty and Sovereignty before whom we come; surely that will help to bring us on our Knees: The sight of the King's Colours will doubtlesse make all, but some presumptuous, carelesse, stout Spirits, to lower their

fails, even when they are going on full sail  
Prayer.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Of Sincerity required in Prayer.*

**H**AVING spoken in part of the general thing propounded, touching the Conditions required to the incessant practise of this Duty of Prayer; and then in handled two of those Conditions required, namely, *Faith*, and *Humility*: we come now to a third; namely, *Sincerity*, or *Purity*, or *Integrity*. The approved Supplies are such as call upon God out of a pure heart, 2 Tim. 2. 22. such as call upon him in Truth, Psal. 145. 18. *The prayer of the upright is delight to the Lord*, Prov. 15. 8. *Prayer is pure*, Job 16. 17.

For our better handling of this Requirement to prayer, consider we,

1. Wherein this *Purity*, *Integrity*, or *Sincerity* required in Prayer doth consist?

2. Why the Lord requireth it?

3. What are the Marks of it?

4. What Means and Helps there are to it?

5. And lastly ; what Motives may stir us up to endeavour it ?

To the first we answer, That such *Sin-* Sincerity consisteth in these six or seven things :

1. In carrying on the whole business of prayer as to God. <sup>1. In praying as to God.</sup> Whether we confesse our sins and miseries, or crave redresse of them ; whether we ask such or such blessings or favours for our selves or others : or whether we blesse the Lord for Grace already vouchsafed us : for what else we do in prayer, we are to carry it with such awe and reverence as those which are speaking to God ; and with such intention and attention, and observance, as those that are now to deal with God ; and to keep our true distance, neither heartlessly distrustful and dismayed, and yet not heedlessly, and presumptuously, or malepertly bold with God : Afraid of him, yet not terrified by him ; solaced in him therein, yet trembling before him ; satisfied in him, yet unsatisfied in continued Desires of Mercy from him ; resting on him, yet restless : and albeit restless, as pressing upon him for Mercies we need, yet resting on him quietly for the same. Having such apprehensions of God in the duty as becometh him, and as are suitable to us, to the Duty, to the present work and workings therein. If we confess our sins, we are sensibly apprehensive of his Purity and Majesty offended thereby ;



of his Goodness and Patience abused thereby ; of his privity to them all , in their circumstances ; of his sin-revenging Justice due thereto , of his sole prerogative to pardon the same , of his readiness in Christ to do it. We are seriously apprehensive of the vileness of such sins , of our own loathsome Nature , whence they did arise ; and our Hearts rise up in holy indignation and detestation of them , and our selves for them : whilst we mention the same , we bleed over them in our Spirits , could even tread upon our selves , and take a holy revenge on our selves for the same ; and all the meltings and breathings of our Spirits in the mention of our sins they are still as to God : When we mention such and such wants of such and such mercies we crave , all is carried as to God. We have suitable workings in our mindes ; we eye him as full of all grace and mercy , as treasuring up all that fulness in the Lord Jesus , as willing and free to communicate the same , as real in his promises of the same ; and the like might be said in the rest. *Psalm 5. 3. David saith, he will direct (or orderly settle, prepare and address) his prayer to the Lord.* And Christ would have such as pray, to *pray to their Father which seeth in secret*, *Matth. 6. 6. Job would order his cause before the Lord.* *Job 23. 4.*

2. In doing it  
as from God.

2. In carrying on the whole business of  
prayer as from God : as *praying in the Spirit*,  
Ephes.

Ephes. 6. 18. *Praying in, or by the dictate and direction of the holy Ghost*, Jude 20. Christians are to drive this holy trade with God, but yet as with his own talents and commodities. *Luk. 19. 16. Lord thy pound hath gained ten pounds*, (saith the good servant.) We should wrestle in and by prayer with God, but as in and by his strength. *Hosea 12. 3. By the Lord will his people make mention of his name* in prayer, or any other ordinance of his, *Isa. 26. 13.*

3. In carrying on the whole Work of prayer, as for God alone. The Suppliants 3. In doing it as for God. of God bring their prayer, not as their offering, so much as God's offering; *Zeph. 3. 10.* they do indeed lift up their prayer; as did the Prophet, *Isaiah 37. 4.* and their heart in prayer; yet so, as withal exalting God in both. *He is extolled with their tongue, in their crying to God with their voice*, *Psalms 66. 17.* The Saints confesse their sins, that God may be cleared in his proceedings, *Psalms 51. 4.* Expresse his mercies in prayer, not to set forth their own praise and commendation as did the Pharisee, *Luke 18. 10, 11, 12.* but that the Lord rather may be glorified, and that the heart in the mention thereof may be awakened to give him glory; and therefore they use in the mention thereof sensibly to im-mix the mention of their own wilenesse and wretchednesse. If they request of God such and such mercies, yet it is that the

Lord may occasionally be the more honoured in granting the same to them. whether the Mercies be of a Spiritual or Temporal Nature. Albeit the Mercies they crave, and Immunity from the Miseries which they complaine of to the Lord be the matter of their prayers, yet not the sole motive. Self is not the great Wheel which setteth all the Wheels of their Hearts going, nor is Self the Centre in which those many Lines of their Spirits and Prayers do end and meet, but rather the Respect to the Lord, and his Name, Favour and Presence; these are all in all. They are a Generation not of false-sackers in their Prayers. but of *seekers of the face of the God of Jacob*, Psal. 24. 6. *and having pure hearts therein, they doe not lift up their souls to vanity*, vers. 4. The main of their desires, is, that the Lord Jesus, the Man of God's right Hand may be glorified, and that the mighty Hand of God may be with him in his Government; and if he be exalted, that shall and will engage them the rather to be thankful to God for it. *Psal. 80. 17, 18. The making of the refused stone, the head-stone of the corner, is that wonder of grace in which they thankfully rejoyce*, Psal. 118. 22, 23, 24. *David wisheth that guilt removed, not meerly, because it lay as so sore and heavy a burden upon his conscience, or that he would have ease of the terrours thereof, but that in being eased and freed thereof,* he

he might be the freer to sound forth the Prayſes of God. *Psalm 51. 14.* He would have his former joy again, not because he made any Idol of his Comforts, and was all for Comfort in his Spirit, for he is as earnest for a clear and sound Heart, *verse 10.* but that he may be more active for God in giving some honour to him in other sinners Conversion, whom he had haply hardened by his sin, &c. *verse 12, 13.* He would have his mouth opened, *verse 15.* not to be more free and chearfull of speech, but that *his lips might set forth God's praise.* The Sons and Daughters of God pray for preservation from, or deliverance out of temptations, and afflictions inward and outward, (as in the Petition of the Lord's Prayer) but with a first and maine Respect and Desire that the Name of God may be hallowed, sanctified, honoured therein; they pray for the Remission of their finnes, and the comfortable Manifestation thereof, not meerly because they are damning, but because detestable to them; not because terrors to them simply, but that God in his gracious and free Pardon of them may have his Name hallowed; and for that cause do they pray for all Temporal Blessings for them in their Callings and Conditions, under the notion of *dayly Bread.* The Godly pour out Prayers, not so much as Expressions of their Desires of observance thereof from God, as of Obedience therein unto

X 4

God;

God. Nor meerly as helping means of future, but also as an homage of love for past mercy. *David* will call upon God, because he loveth not himselfe, but him, *Psalms* 116.1,2.

4. In like conscience of use of means.

4. In being as ready pressed to a serious use of all other means to obtain mercies prayed for, and avoid miseries bewailed; as to pray for the one, and against the other. *Abel* bringeth himself with his Offering, both are equally at the beck and service of God: so did not *Cain*, Gen. 4. 4. They offer themselves in with their prayers, and such-like service, as the main Sacrifice, willing to prove what is the holy, and acceptable and perfect will of God, Rom. 12.1,2. And therefore no wonder they are pressed to use any holy means to further what they ask of God. Their heart and hand is (as I may say) combined to, and joyned with their tongues. If they cry for wisdom, they bring their instruments to dig and search for the precious mines thereof. *Prov.* 2.4 3. Their prayers are called seeking, *Isai.* 55. 6. because they are ever attended with searching in all Corners, in every means, if they may finde out, and light of the mercies they pray for. And they are comprehended under the notion of that hungry, *Math.* 5. 6. that will break thorow even stone walls, any difficulties, but it will come by the food it craveth. Many instances hereof might be given: but more



more hereof, when we come to speak of that case about use of means.

5. In not hiding any thing from God, as unwilling or not desiring his privacy there-  
to, but at least endeavouring to open all to him, *declaring our wayes to him*, Psal. 119. 26. *Pouring out our hearts to him*, Psalm 62. 8. And where we fall short, craving a further discovery of our selves by and to the Lord, *Psalm 139. 23, 24.* When *Job* would cleare his Integrity, and prove his Sincerity, he doth it, professing That he covered not his Transgressions as *Adam*, *Job 31, &c.* Sincere ones are *εὐλαβητοὶ*, such as would be, and have all in them seen of God: as persons held to the Sun-light, perspicuous, transparent, yea in all their spots; Suppliants being much in commerce with God, they have experience of his all-searching and all-seeing eye, and cannot but will and desire his search, *Psalm 139, 1, 2, 23 verses* compared. They are acquainted with his admirable faithfulness and cordialness to them, and therefore are not loath to have it thus, but glad of that opportunity. They finde they pay dearly for any contrary acts of guile; and beholding withal the happinesse of plain dealing with God in their words and walks, they cannot but desire and endeavour the same, *Psalm 32. 2, 3, 5, 6.*

5. In hiding nothing from God.

6. In harbouring nothing willingly and knowingly in themselves, tending to hinder

6. In harbouring no sin, hindring answer of prayer.

hinder Audience: and Acceptance of their Persons and Prayers by the Lord, or free Access to the Lord and to his gracious Throne. The Psalmist declareth that the unfainednesse of his Prayer, in that he durst make that Appeal to the Lord, and is purposed *not to offend so much as in a word*, *Psal. 17. 1. 3.* And *Psal. 66. 15.* The sincerity of his Heart in Prayer appeared, in that he, albeit he had evil in his Heart dwelling there, yet was not the same had in respect by him. Hence that putting away of iniquity required in persons which are intended to pray, *Job. 11. 13, 14 15.* hence the holy clearing of the Saints, (as it is called, *2 Cor. 7. 11.*) when entring upon Prayer, by premising and prefacing their selfe-condemning Confessions, as in *Ezra*, *Daniel*, and others. Hence that casting up Accounts when Persons are then to offer up their Gifts; then is the remembring time of what was not taken such notice of before; *When thou offerest by gift at the Altar, and there rememberest, &c. Matth. 5. 23.* When to lift up our Hands and our Hearts unto God in the Heavens, then if ever there is, or ought to be searching and trying of our wayes, *Lam. 3. 40, 41.* we are to draw near with our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and privy to any knowne sin approved in us or by us, *Heb. 10. 22.* Sincerity in prayer loaths to mean Rebellion, when it speaks Repentance, to cry, *My Father*, and yet do

to the utmost, *Jerem. 3. 4 5.* Sincerity  
will heartily complain of any lets to the  
passage of Prayer, and account the same  
great burthen and misery, as *Lam. 3. 8,*  
but it will never connive or wink at them,  
give free way to them. Sincerity is very  
al, not intending speech with God, so  
much as successe from God, and therefore will  
x, dare not, cannot own any spiritual make-  
ures.

7. In avoiding all affectation of any  
expression in Prayer. In Hypocrisie there  
affectation: Hypocrites are Stage-players,  
which albeit they are illiterate Dunces many  
of them, yet will be high-flown sometimes  
their Expressions, their Mouth speaketh  
great swelling words when they speak to  
Men or God, or else they fail of their use  
and aime, *Jude 16.* And in all affectation  
there is some Hypocrisie, be the Persons  
who they will be that are therein exercised.  
Sincerity will account those Gentile-like  
esteemed flourishes of Rhetorical Ingemina-  
tions, but vaine Repetitions, *Matth. 6. 6, 7.*  
not expecting that the Lord should be mo-  
ved by any such-like vanity, *ibid.* Sincere-  
ity loathes and fears to complement with the  
all-seeing and faithful God. The Lips of  
the Saints in their Prayer, are as a Thred  
of Scarlet, not stuffed out with the gow-  
ry Rhetorick of Man (for it is in compari-  
son of the high and holy Language of the Spi-  
rit, no better) but with the pure-spun spiritual  
eloquence

7. In avoiding  
all affected  
expressions in  
prayer.

eloquence of God, *Cant. 4. 3. Thy lips are  
thred of scarlet.*

Reasons of  
Sincerity in  
prayer.

Now to answer more briefly to the  
cond thing propounded : The Reasons  
God requireth Sincerity in our Prayer, *ma*  
such as these.

1. Sincerity is  
most futable  
to Gods nature  
to whom we  
pray.

1. Because Purity and Simplicity is  
futable to his Nature with whom we have  
do in Prayer : as a simple pure Spirit,  
*will be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth*  
*John 4. 23, 24.* He seeketh most that  
of his Image of Truth and Purity, in  
person or performance. *Such doth the*  
*ther seek to worship him*, *ibid.* Truth  
the inward parts is that which he eyeeth  
desireth, *Psalms 51. 6.* The more of  
therein, the more approved, the more  
lightful to him : *The words of the pure*  
*(to God also) pleasant words*, *Prov.*  
*26.* His Image in his Children is low  
The Child that is likest his Father, is  
made of. The Purity and Sincerity of  
People of God, is reckoned their Perfection  
albeit they have many imperfections  
tending their Persons and Performances  
Thence are the godly called *the perfect*, *1 Co*  
*2. 6.* Besides, Purity and Sincerity is  
futable to Christ our High-Priest, who  
*holy and undefiled*, *Heb. 7. 26.* And  
would have his Priests, his Saints, *wholly*  
*ly priesthood*, and so conformable to him  
*1 Pet. 2. 9.* Besides, there is Truth, Rea-  
ty, Seriousness, and Solidity in all we eye

improve in prayer; and therefore, no wonder  
 God will have us carried with an answer-  
 able frame of Spirit therein; the Priest of  
 our Profession is what he is really, Truth it  
 self, *John* 14. 6. The meritorious Sacrifice  
 was real and true; it was the Sacrifice of him-  
 self, *Heb.* 9. 26. The Covenant of Christ's  
 Blood, a real, ratified, forcible Testament,  
*Heb.* 8. 6. and *Chap.* 9. 17, &c. The way  
 made for us a true and living way, and there-  
 fore we may well draw near to God with true  
 hearts, *Heb.* 10. 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 vers.  
 compared.

2. Because Sincerity ever useth to put  
 to all its strength in prayer; and that is it  
 which the Lord liketh best. *Hypocrisie di-*  
*videth*, *James* 1. 6, 8. and that doubling  
 and dividing, maketh weak work. It is not  
 of heard-strength, which is but brittle, and  
 will not abide any knocks, *Prov.* 26. 23.  
 Burning lips in zealous expressions, joyned  
 with a wretched false heart, are but like a pot-  
 heard, covered with Silver dross; but Sin-  
 cerity is single and unanimous in all its actions,  
 and so its united force must needs be more a-  
 vailable.

2. Sincerity  
 strengthneth  
 our prayers.

3. Because Sincerity putteth a holy Grace  
 upon, and force into our words in Prayer.  
 Hence that strength ordained in the mouths of  
 Babes, intire and sincere Ones, *Psalms* 8. 2.  
*Grace of the lips* is joyned with *pureness*  
*of heart* *Prov.* 22. 11. And as earthly Kings  
 besfriend that in their Petitioners, so doth the  
 Lord

3. Sincerity  
 most graceth  
 our prayers



Lord in his. Hence is it that *David* pleases his unfeigned speaking to God in Prayer and Argument with God to hear him, *Psal.* 17. 1.

4. Sincerity 4. Because Prayers of sincere ones getteth most in ever of most publick use and good, and the prayer.

a thing the Lord greatly liketh. A pure hearted and hearty *Job* praying to the Lord, deliver the Island where he is thereby, *Job* 22. 27, 30. by the blessing of the upper the city where they are is exalted, *Psal.* 11. 11.

Marks of Sincerity in prayer Touching the third thing propounded: Marks and Characters of Sincerity in Prayer are such as these.

1. When the materials in of our Prayers are right and holy the prayer are the *Psal.* 17. 1. 2. When our hungry fires expressed in Prayer, are after Righteousnesse, they are surely such as are counted of God sincere, *Matth.* 5. 6. when in Prayer also we first and chiefly seek the kingdom of God, *Matth.* 6. 33. the light of Gods countenance, *Psal.* 4. 6. not as the world do, some worldly good, *ibid.* When the minde not baser, common Metal, Brass, Tin, &c. but Gold and Silver, precious Materials, Requests of weight and worth with God; it argueth we have some spiritual Measure of Sincerity and Purity when we trade with God, not about trifles but Pearls of great price; it argueth we are not Pedlars, Mountebank-Hypocrites,

solid and substantial Merchants and Citizens of Heaven.

2. When our whole man doth act in prayer; understanding and judgement, and conscience, and will, and affections. they do their parts in it, and are joynt Petitioners and Suppliants, *Psalm 109. 4. But I pray-er, saith David, he was all prayer, or all of David, or in David, was herein employed. Psalm 119. 58. With my whole heart* (saith he) *have I increased thy favour*; the Soul and Spirit, all the inwards, and the sublimest parts of the Church are employed therein, *Isaiah 26. 6.* If this little World in Man, this little Commonwealth in a Christian become a joynt Sollicitour unto our heavenly Sovereign, surely this King of Saints will account of the Requests serious, and the Sollicitour intire therein; as earthly Kings do the joynt Petitions of whole Bodies, and Counties and Countries. When every string in the Instrument sounds its part, and keeps due proportion, both the Instrument is right tuned, and the Musick and Lesson played is fullest of true harmony. So it is here, the Saints when intirely and wholly exercised in the Prayers they make, surely they are sincerely employed therein. When all within the Soul, as bound by Oath, and Vow and Covenant unto the Lord, to deal truly in matters touching him and us, do agree in what they present and utter before him, surely then it will passe for a true verdict.

verdict, as in other cases it doth with men.

3. When we still strive to pray to purpose.

3. When in praying still we endeavour to do it to purpose, or else we are to our selves as if we had not prayed. Righteous Ones will pray effectually, *James 6. 15, 16.* they pray, they lift up a Prayer unto the Lord, *2 Kings 19. 4.* When a Factor or Servant will not leave trading or working until he make something of it, you will find then he is Honest and Just in his Calling and dealing; like *Abraham's* Servant, he prefers his Masters occasions which he was to dispatch, before his very Food, *Gen. 24. 3.* and *verse 49.* as he was serious in speaking his Errand, so in pressing for his Answer and when he hath done, hastes to make return thereof to his Master, *verse 56.* so it is here in serving God with our Spirits in prayer, *Rom. 1. 9.* They are true and trusty Soldiers to their Commander and Country which will not out of the Field without some Trophies of Victory; like those which were thereto injoyned and adjured (*1 Sam. 14. 24, 26.*) though the Honey would ex drop into their Mouthes, as they were in pursuit of the Enemy, yet they made no compleating of the Victory, albeit, with some denials of themselves in their prefer refreshments. So it is here, when we are sincerely set to seek and wrestle for Mercy, we will not away without a blessing in and by it. Or as a Pleader is honest in soliciting

ting a Clients case, when he will not cease pleading until he have brought the same to some comfortable issue; so is it with the spirit of a Christian, which is mainly employed by us in this holy pleading work; the more serious, resolute and unmoveable it is therein or therefrom, without some good success, the more sincere.

4. When we strain not much to speak more then is, or otherwise then it is, either in the general bent of our souls, or then is in the present desires of our spirits, or then is in the sense or feelings, or fears, or griefs, or workings of our hearts; but speak as things are to us and with us. It is not so much the strength of brains and judgement or memory, that prompteth the mouth to speak, to fill up time with airy expressions, as the strength of heart-workings of holy desires and griefs, &c. Which put the people of God upon uttering what they do in prayer; they had rather cease, after some serious strivings to the contrary, against distempered, senselesse spending of time, in meer words without spiritual life, then go in such sort, albeit they may seem to themselves or others but in an illasse at present by reason thereof. *I opened my mouth and panted* (saith he, *Psal. 119. 31.*) *for I longed for thy Commandments.* strength of holy desires after Grace, to understand, believe, and practise the Word of God more, made him be so large and

4. When wee strive to speak as it is with us

Y

zealous

zealous in his prayers, out of the abundance not of his head, but of his heart his mouth thus speaketh. Hence the Saints prayers are called their *desires*, Psal. 145. 1 and 10. 17.

5. When most frequent and fervent in secret prayer.

5. When we are most frequent and fervent in secret prayers of all other prayers. As it is said of grief, so is it true of prayer. He prayeth most truly and sincerely, he prayeth most secretly. Hence our Saviour doth oppose secret prayer to hypocritical praying, *Matth. 6. 5, 6*. Slye false deiles will be careful and very exact in what they speak when witnesses are by; but honest deiles will be as exact in what they speak to themselves all alone. So is it here; many, it may be, which carry it with much Zeal and circumspection before others, yet in their Closets if they do pray at all, it is so faintly, so drowsily, so curtly, so carelessly, that it is as good as no prayer at all. Let such look to their spirits whether all be right within. Whatsoever false-hearted spouses may seem to speak so & so lovingly & loyally to their Spouses before others, that such as are true would take them to be very chaste and faithful, and kinde; yet if in secret, they carry it otherwise, their honesty may be suspected. So is it here; if Christians should carry it in expressions in prayer before others as if very loyal to the Lord Jesus, in secret it is quite otherwise, their hearts are not so entire and honest as become



eth their profession. Verily, sincerity is plain and open hearted, and surely never more then when alone with God its friend. Sincerity in prayer, is simplicity and singlenesse in prayer; and therefore will be the same every where. If praying with others, striving still to speak with such life and power, and holiness as is meet: and if alone praying, it will put us upon the like seriousness of attentiveness & intentiveness in, and on the duty in hand.

6. When we can in prayer be as earnest for others, as for our selves; yea, we can be very serious in wrestling with God for such as have injured us; and that not so much that we may be less molested by them as that the Lord Jesus might be magnified in them. The very thoughts what a mighty conquest the Lord would work in their conversion, what a glorious name he might get thereby, what a foil it would be to the Devils kingdom, power and policie, &c. this putteth spirits into their prayers for them. *David*, albeit he had many things lay heavy upon himself, as appears in the whole 51. Psalm; yet *verse 18.* he prayes for, and is mindful of *Zion and of the Churches good.* Self hath lesse ground work and foot-hold in prayers for others, then those which are for our selves. The Lord Jesus maketh account that they had need be perfect as their heavenly Father is (in their measure and proportion of perfection) that love

6 When as earnest in prayer for others, yea, for enemies, as for our selves.

and wish so well to their very enemies, *Mat*  
5.44,48.

7. When as

ready to praise God for mercies received, as to pray to him  
God as to pray for what we want. Godly *Esther* and *Mordecai*  
to him.

*decai* are as solicitous and careful that they  
and others with them may have their so-  
lemn Thanksgiving dayes, for the graci-  
ous deliverance for which they had prayed  
and fasted, as ever they were of the day  
of Prayer and Fasting, *Esther* 9.22,29,31  
verses compared. Self will be sometime  
prayer-full, and so will hypocrisie, because  
its good and sutable to both; satisfying  
the desires of both, and furthering the ends  
and aimes of both may come in thereby.  
But sincerity is that which is and will be  
praiseful and thankful. An honest and  
poor man will scarce ever forget a special  
kindnesse shewed to him by another at his  
request in a time of his necessity; when e-  
ver he meeteth his friend, he will be thank-  
ing him a long time after; and when he is  
with others, he will be thankfully acknow-  
ledging the same, to the great commendati-  
on of that his friend. But a Counterfeiter,  
a Vagabond, a Rogue, for whom you do any  
office of love, you shall hardly ever see, or  
hear of him more; when he hath gotten his  
penny-worths of you, he is gone, unless he  
need you again; he returns not to acknow-  
ledge it, albeit at the present he give you  
good language. So is it here; a Christians  
grace

grace and sincerity thereof is more tried when he getteth prayer-blessings, then when he wanteth the same. Self being empty prayeth, but self when full looketh but to his own satiety: but self-denial, the daughter and hand-maid of Sincerity, will not be so circled within the compasse of self in his prayers. Look as it is in a Prospective glass, if you turn the wrong end formost, great things will seem very small, and things that are neereſt will appear as a far off, and small things will hardly be discerned: So is it here, when self and hypocrisie are to look upon mercies of prayer; great ones are but little, and small mercies none at all, &c. but sincerity taketh the trueſt ſurvey of them all in their dimensions, and colours, and therefore no wonder if it be thankful; sincerity will bear ſuch true and full witneſſe to our extreame miſery in our ſelves, that the light and white of mercy, compared with this darkneſſe and black, will prove very amiable and praiſe-worthy. Sincerity will truly and faithfully compare our worthineſſe and utter unworthineſſe at our beſt, with Chriſts glorious merit and worthineſſe, that the eye of the ſoul that looks on, cannot but diſcern praiſe-worthy glory therein. Greatneſſe, and abſolute Sovereignty, and independency in the Lord, and unutterable nearneſſe and dependency in us, ſhall truly be preſented & compared in a ſincere hearted Suppliant: and can he be other then very

thankful? Self, (which prompteth a false-hearted Christian to speak for blessings) will be Judge too of the same. And there is little likelihood of right judgement to proceed from so bloody and ungrateful an Umpire; and if not rightly judged of, what thanks to be expected? But sincerity judgeth of divine blessings by the Rules of the Spirit and Word of God. The spring of Sincerity in Prayer riseth from God; and therefore it will assuredly return to God in praises which are suitable, *Luke 17.13, 15, 19.* The sincere Samaritan Supplicant is as loud in his praises of God, as ever he was in his prayers; but so were not the other.

Let us now briefly speak to the two last things propounded, first of the Means and Helps to further Sincerity in prayer, and then of the Motives to stir us up to the same.

Helps to sincerity in Prayer.

Helps to Sincerity and Purity in Prayer may be such as these.

I. Be sincere in all other acts of our lives.

1. Labour to be sincere in other passages and practices of our life to Godward, and to manward. When Sincerity is interwoven in this whole piece of our lives and conversations, it will shew it self in this part of it. Sincerity and right things should be our constant and daily study. *The thoughts of the Righteous are Right, Prov. 12.5.* and therefore no wonder that the words of the pure are pleasant words, *Prov. 11.26.* When men

men love purenesse of heart in all their courses, there will be a grace and favour thereof in all their discourses with God or men, as *Prov. 22. 11.* when persons double in some things with God and their own souls, they will do so in other things likewise. *James 1. 8.* *A double minded man is unstable in all his wayes: Hypocrisie is leaven,* *Luke 12. 2.* If you lay it, and hide it, and suffer it to lye in one part of the lump of your conversation, it will spread, and sowre all the rest soon, *James 4. 2, 3.* compared, prescribing the remedy of that guileful asking to spend the blessings of God *upon their lusts, verse 23.* He instanceth the double minds that such have, and they must purge themselves of their double mind in all other things, if ever they would approach and draw nigh to God in prayer rightly, and not ask amisse; and for this purpose, get we our hearts and hands rid of what ever sinful defilements which do foment that doubling with God, and hindereth this integrity in prayer. If men in any kind retain the same, they will ask amisse, ask things with a false adulterous heart; *ibid. verse 23, 4.* compared. We shall never make streight steps in this part of our christian race, *if that which is lame be not healed, Heb. 12. 13.* If the feet of our affections be diseased, we can never wrestle with God so stably, but shall halt therein, as well as in other of the waies of God.

2. When at any time we espy any flaws



2 Be truly  
abased for any  
guile therein.

or doublings with God in prayer, (as the best sometimes may espy some guileful sligh-  
tings and overlineſſe therein) we be greatly  
abased for the ſame, as *James* wiſheth ſuch  
as ask amiſſe, and ſuch false ſpirits therein  
*James* 4. 2, 3, 4. or ſuch as would be rid of  
ſuch doubling guileful diſtempers, *verſe* 8  
to be afflicted and mourne : namely, for  
that doubling with God and their own  
souls : when Chriſtians pay dear for ſuch  
ſlyneſſe and flightneſſe, they will ſurely  
take heed thereof ; the more bitter it be-  
comes, and grievous to their palate, the  
more will they leave it and loath it. It is  
to be feared that many Chriſtians which let  
ſuch ſlyneſſe and guilneſſe in prayer, they  
are content ſometimes that they have pray-  
ed, albeit the ſame were a ſhell and ſhadow  
of the duty, and the pitch and ſubſtance  
thereof were wanting ; or if they be trou-  
bled lightly & ſlightly with it, all is not well  
with them, that they deal not ſo faithfully  
with God and their own ſouls, yet they  
are not thoroughly ſtirred up with ſerious  
grief and holy indignation by reaſon there-  
of, and therefore go on oft times in ſuch a  
way. If guile of ſpirit were ſo exactly and  
thoroughly examined and ſentenced, and ho-  
ly revenge taken upon it, ſuch a cheate  
would not ſo much haunt the hearts of Chri-  
ſtians in this and other of the ordinances of  
God as it doth. And to this let me add  
that we carefully and reſolutely reſiſt ſo  
that

than, when at any time, then. or afterwards, he doth tempt us to this guiliness and false-heartednesse in our talking with God in prayer: give not the least way to it, but when at first you perceive the tempter busie that way, to put us upon sinister ends in our requests, or any sly dealing with God and our souls in prayer, away with it, strongly and seasonably bend we all our strength against it, discover to God by humble and solemn confession that treacherous motion; cry out upon it, pursue it, and never leave till we have sent it packing with shame and loathing of heart. Hence is it that *James* wisheth such as were so guilty in their prayers they made, *James* 4. 2, 3, 4. to make use of that remedy, *Resist the devil*, namely, in his temptation thereunto, and he will flye from you, verse 7. and espying such like wiliness of spirit in our prayers, let us bee willing to be crossed in any such requests as we make with such a spirit, for verily God wil not grant such desires to us if he love us, *Jam.* 3. & if we do or should do it, it would be worse for us. Many of the Saints see cause to blesse God afterwards, that the Lord did not grant such or such requests of theirs, perceiving that indeed their heads were not right therein, and tis well for them that God will crosse them in any sinful desires of theirs: yea, it would be better for us that God should fall upon us with some good down-right blowes, whilst we carry it thus  
willy

wilily with him in any of our prayers, (as usually he doth deal with his servants, under such distempers. Wars came upon them many contentions amongst them, that doubled and divided so with God, they were divided amongst themselves, and not so true to each other, *James 4 1, 2, 3, 4* but as a remedy of that inward cause of these outward disorders and mischiefs, the Apostle wisheth such, (and let us follow his counsel) *Submit we our selves to God verse 7.* and humble our selves under to such divine providence, *verse 10.* see that it is good, say it is good, and then we shall be better.

3 Bee of an humble spirit in prayer.

3. Labor to be of an humble & lowly heart in our prayers, & we shall pray the more honestly & intirely. They are ever proud spirits that have such self-aims and flie respects to their own names or such good blessings as the main in their prayers, which may make them seem some-body amongst men, without ever approbation therein they get from God. *James* telleth those he mentioned, that they were of *adulterous spirits, Jam. 4 4.* that they asked and had not, as asking amiss out of base respects: and *verse 2, 3.* and *verse 6* he telleth them more plainly that they would be above others in gifts and repute, and estate, &c. *Envy* setteth them to work, *verse 5.* they are proud, and therefore God resisteth them in that way of asking; but humble ones get the grace

in which their hearts seek. Humble ones have no such wily fetches & reaches, but are plain hearted: they are such which are lifted up, whose hearts are not upright within them in any thing what they say or do, *Heb. 2. 4.*

4 Get and exercise more faith in the Lord. So much unbelieve in our asking, so much doubling with God, *James 1. 6, 8.* Unbelieve is never cordial, but slavish and selfish. Faith will cause a through opening of the heart to God. *Psal. 62. 1, 8.* Wee shall then draw neer to God with the truest hearts, when with most Assurance. *Heb. 10. 22.* There is secret Atheisme of heart, or infidelity, and much unbelief, in that any at any time dare to double with God in speaking to him, making God like to man, which might be mocked and deluded with goodly words and pretences, and not to be a searcher of their heart and reines; else men durst not make so bold with him, to baffle with him to his face. *David*, one that had made too bold to affirme that of his integrity, of his hatred of Gods enemies, *Psal. 139. 22, 23.* qualifieth it with a plain hearted motion to him, whom he knew was privy to his spirit, to search it, and see whether there were any way of wickednesse in him, and to steer his course for him in the right way. Where faith is, love will attend and shew it self; love useth still to be candid and cordial, and intire in all its speeches to him whom

4 Bee wee of believing spirits therein.

whom the soul loveth, the more than boundeth, the more sincere. When the Apostle prayeth that the *Philippians* may be sincere (in all their words, and walks, speaking God, themselves, or others,) he prayeth that their love may abound; then they approve the most excellent things, the best way of praying to God, serving of God, and walking with God. *Philip* 1.9, 10.

Motives to  
sincerity

Motives to sincerity in prayer, may be such as these.

It will argue  
Gods effectual  
speaking to us,  
and ours to  
him.

In that it will be an argument of a living and sound fruit of Gods speaking to us, and of our effectual speaking to him. The former is evident; when our prayer language is sincere, surely God hath turned unto us some pure lip, some soul-fitting ministry. *Zeph.* 3.9, 10. Such of the *Children of Egypt* as should be converted saving of the Prophet saith, they should (as saith *Su* thereof) *speake the language of Canaan*. *Lev.* 19.18. Especially in worshipping God in prayer, there they should not speak the language of *Ashdod*, (as it were) the half the Jews language, like those *Nations*. *Lev.* 13.24. half carnal language, nature, the worlds language; but at the least in the desire and endeavour of their souls to speak the language of the holy Ghost, to pray in the holy Ghost. And the latter is as evident; truth in our seeking of God and mercy in Gods answers, will meet together, as in other cases they



*Psal.* 85. 10. The Lord himself maketh it an argument of his respect to his peoples desires, in that they are *children that will not lye*, *Isai.* 63. 8. and giveth it as a pledge when they may expect infallibly that hee will answer their prayers, namely, when they are cordial and intire in seeking of him, when they seek him with all their heart, *Jer.* 29. 11, 12, 13. And the Psalmist maketh his cordial and intire seeking of God, to which his very conscience was privy, and the Lord much rather, as an argument with God, to pray for respect to his desires, *Psal.* 119. 10, 94. Sincerity and integrity in our speeches is amiable to men, to all sorts of men. *Proverb.* 26. 13. and 24. 26. and the God of truth is not lesse, but more delighted in the words of truth. Hence it is that upright hearted Supplicants, they are (and well they may be) freest and boldest of all others with the Lord. Such as come with true hearts, come with much confidence, *Heb.* 10. 21. they can & dare walk at liberty when conscious to their integrity, that they seek the statutes of God, *Psal.* 119. 45. Conscience of secret guile, it will appal a man, when to deal with an all-seeing God. *Hypocrites are afraid*, *Isai.* 33. 14. but are perswaded, that such as speak uprightly may come neer to God boldly, and converse with him safely, albeit in respect of his justice a consuming fire, *verse* 15. But amongst them

them, who may or dare come neer him with such stubble? *verse 14.* and if they durst fool-hardy as senselesse ones are, yet it will be to no purpose, salvation which they may desire, would be far from such persons, seeking not God but themselves. *Pf. 119.*

2 Where this is, God will cover many failings.

2 In that God will cover a great deal of weakness in their persons and in their Prayers, where yet there is sincerity in the bent of their desires. True it is, that sincerity in their prayers is a special protection against any ruling evils in the world. They that seek God with their whole hearts, they do no iniquity, *Psalms 119. 2, 3.* God is engaged to protect and preserve them from such swervings. Hence that plea, *Pf. 119. 10, 94.* When Christians do not deal cordially and plainly with God and their own souls in the request they put up against their sins, and for Gods grace, they do but strengthen then the part of sin; pretending to speak against it, and not doing it cordially, it provoketh God to leave them to such lusts, and to receive a due recompence of such spiritual Treachery, from such secret Traitors: but as for the Saints, who are cordial with God in prayer, albeit they escape that mischief of ruling evils, yet they are perplexed and molested with inwardling distempers, which haunt them and pursue them hard at heels, even to the very door of Grace, to which they repair by prayer; and herein is the kindnesse

compassion of God to them, that he overlooketh these their distempers in prayer, & owneth the meaning of his Spirit in theirs therein, *Rom. 8. 26.* and *Psal. 34. Title,* with *verse 45.* God looketh at the bent of such a heart, and by that measureth out to them mercy, *1 Kings 8. 39.* Do according to his wayes whose heart thou knowest. God searcheth the heart both of sincere and false Christians, in all their doings, to give to every one according to his wayes, *Jerem. 17. 10.* to the false heart, indignation and wrath, but to them that are sincere, eye and aim at, and seek for glory; to them he giveth honour and immortality, *Rom. 2. 7.* For of all others, upright ones have the successful influences of all others prayers with them, and with their prayers; each sincere one prayeth that *God would do good to them, Psalm 125. 4.* As for others, they are left to be discovered, and left to such courses at the length, as shall declare them to be evil doers, *verse 5.* The continuance of Gods faithfulness to sincere ones, is the joynt request of all that are godly; and the several petitions of each of them, *Psal. 36. 10.* Many are the evils of hypocrisie in prayer.

3 Consider of the evils of hypocrisie in prayer. God esteemeth basely of such prayers, as but drosse of some Silver, *Prov. 26. 23.* It is but as a stinking savour and steam rising from a dead rotten person, *Matth.*

*Matth 23. 27.* He eyeth us then as speaking lies rather than uttering prayers, because we pretend to pray, and worship, and serve God, but do indeed therein but serve our own base lusts, become Petitioners for them, *Hos. 7. 13, 14.* and *James 4. 2, 3.* and that we speak against God rather than for God. *They lyed against mee,* saith God, *Hos. 7. 13.* yet in pretence *cryed to him*; but in truth they did not cry to him, when they *howled on their beds*: their ends were carnal, *ibid.* and they make God a God that was as carnal as they; a God that would further the desires of lusts; else why do they petition him thereto? and this is to belie the Lord, and the Lord useth to answer such according to their hearts of fire, according to their *heart-Idols*, and to their *lip-hypocrisies*, *Ezek. 14.* he *gave them up to their lusts*: they secretly chose Delusions, notwithstanding other pretences of sacrificing, *Isaiah 66. 3.* and the Lord chuseth to let them have their choice, *verse 14.* and at length takes away that good that they seem to have, and to prayer they become as speechless, *Matth. 23. 11.*

## CHAP VII.

*Of Watchfulness required to Prayer.*

**H**AVING handled three of the Conditions required to the incessant practise of this Duty of Prayer, we come now to speak of the fourth and last Requisite there-to, namely, *Watchfulness*; which is three-fold: 1. Watching *unto* Prayer, Ephes. 6.18. 2. Watching *in* prayer, Coloss. 4.2. 3. Watching *after* prayer, Psalm 130.1, 2, 5.

In which let us consider severally three things.

1. The Nature of the Duty in the three forementioned branches thereof.

2 The Reasons und Motives urging to the practise thereof.

3 Some Helps furthering the performance of the same.

Watchfulness unto prayer consisteth in these four particulars.

1. Being of a wakeful spirit, ready and fit to take the due seasons of prayer, as the Lord requireth, *Isaiah 55.6. Call upon him while he is neer*, as the Saints usual practise is; and that is a part of their special privilege so to do. *They call upon God in a time wherein he may be found.*, Psalm 32.6. There is a morning of opportunity which

Watching unto prayer consists;

1. In readiness to take all prayer-seasons

Z

David



David will take for prayer, *Psalms* 5. True it is, that God is up before us, he stirring early for his peoples help, as soon as the face of the morning, or season of shewing mercy to them appeareth, he helpeth them, *Psalms* 46.5. but yet we may not be up in our spirits; we had need rouse up our hearts, as being too oft drownded at such times, and not watching for the first day-break of a season of mercy. So that look as David did when to praise God, what are we to do when to pray to him, *Awake early*, *Psalms* 57.7,8. There is much spiritual sluggishness cleaveth to the spirits of the best in spiritual services: as sometimes the eyes of their bodies were covered with sleep when they should have prayed, *Matthew* 26.4. so is it too oft with our spirits when they are not in wakeful plight. That God ly Matron when to utter a Song of Praise to God, see how she doubleth, and redoubleth the word *Awake*; *Awake, awake Deborah*; *Awake, awake, utter a Song*. *Judges* 5.12. It is not a little calling that will wake our slumbring, heavy-eyed spirits. Sometimes they call up a sleeping *Jonah* arise and call upon his God, *Jonah* 1.6. Zachary must be rowed out of his sleepiness to observe the *Vision*, by the *Angel*, *Luke* 4.1. When the Lord Jesus would hear his Doves voice in prayer, *Cant.* 2.14. see how oft he calleth to her to arise and come near verse 10,13. Sometimes the Spirit of God

in their consciences and spirits themselves calleth them up to attend this holy imployment, if any morning-light of approaching grace peepeth forth, or season of doing the Lord service in prayer is observed, as in *Deborah* and *David*, and others of the Saints. If ever our spirits had need be up and ready, they had need be so when we are to pray. A sleepy spirit will scarce speak sense (as I may say) to God in prayer. It is burthensome to a friend to stand listening to a sleepy broken discourse, consisting of half words and sentences indistinctly placed and uttered in his ears, albeit it be by his friend. So is it in a like spiritual, disorderly drowsie praying and speaking to the Lord: as men in a sleepy fit, rather ther lose something they got in their hand, then get more unto the same, by craving it in such a drowsie sort: So is it here, we are losers and not gainers by prayers whereunto our spirits are not wakened to be fit to speak to the Lord as becometh him & us.

2. In heeding to make use of all holy and special advantages unto prayer that Divine Providence offereth. When Christians wait for such *items* of Providence, such speaking invitations to Prayer, then they watch unto prayer indeed. As at other posts of the doors of Christ, so at this are the Saints to watch and wait, *Prov. 8.33*, 34. Albeit the Lord in respect of his own disposition to mercy, be alwayes ready to

2. In taking all Prayer advantages.

hear and help his people, yet he is not always to be spoken withal for that end; neither are we so fit to speak to him. At some times again it is in our hearts to pray to the Lord, as *David* said, *he found in his heart to pray that prayer to God*, 2 Sam. 7.27. At other times that advantage was to seek. It requireth much holy skill and care to espie and discern advantages to prayer. A wandering, watchlesse, spiritlesse, sluggish eye observeth them not, espieth them not, discerneth not the same.

In minding all  
prayer occasions.

3. In observing narrowly & distinctly what necessary & weighty occasions of prayer we have, searching our wayes for that purpose, and then lifting up heart and hand in prayer. *Lam.* 3.40, 41. Like Pleaders, Saints ought to be good Students, that they may be fitter to plead: we are to study our hearts and lives, and the cases of both, before we plead them. Or look as Trades-men look over and set their marks upon their parcels ere they do retail them: so in this case ought the Saints to look over the particulars of their hearts and lives, before they do trade with God in prayer about the same.

In minding  
the plight of  
our spirits  
when to pray.

4. In observing wisely the frame of spirit in which we are, when we are to address our selves to prayer; how fit we are or unfit for prayer; how far lively, or listlesse or dead hearted; how far tender, or otherwise senselesse; how far

ous, or slighty; what faith is stirring, or what distrusts, doubts or temptations: and like other Musicians, which when they are to play, as they are about to tune their Instruments, they make use of their musical ear, attending how far each string is in tune or no, too high or too low, too sharp or too flat; So is it here in the Suppliants of God, which are Harpers, as wee have shewed; it is their peculiar property and gift above other men; they have (as I may say) a musical ear, an attentive discerning spirit, and can tell when their spirits are prepared or unprepared, and how far forth prepared or not prepared to seek the Lord. *David* had not onely a forelook to that, that his heart might bee prepared to praise God; but he had a reflect look upon the same, and giveth his censure upon it, that as far as hee could judge, his heart was in indifferrent good tune to praise God, *Psalms* 57.7. And the like observation did the Church make of her heart when to seek the Lord; strong and lively desires of God and his favour were stirring in her, and she is resolved to improve them that way to the utmost. How many people which pretend to be seekers of God, are utterly carelesse in making these observations, and being thus heart-awaked for this duty? which I leave to their own consciences seriously to consider. But

We ought to watch unto prayer, because

1 It's a special help to pray.

2 It helpeth enlargements in Prayer.

3 It helpeth success in Prayer.

4. Watching in Prayer consisteth in a wakeful spirit throughout the duty.

the people of God ought thus to watch unto prayer, it appeareth :

1. In that it will be a special help to pray pertinently, awfully, seriously, and sensibly. If we would pray in the Spirit with the help, life, and power of the holy Ghost in a spiritual and heavenly manner we had need *watch unto prayer, Eph. 6. 18. praying in the spirit, watching thereunto, &c.*

2. In that it will much help spiritual enlargements, and continuance in the act of prayer ; and prevent straitnings and inconstancy : *praying alway with all manner of prayer, and watching thereunto, are joynt* yea it will help our skill in prayer, *we shall pray in the spirit* in that sense, even in and with the skill thereof. The best students are, or may, or will be the best pleaders in this way of prayer.

3. In that it will be a special means to make our prayers more availing and successful, both in the exercise of our Faith and hope, and patience : *such watching unto prayer, Ephes. 6. 18.* helpeth to further that mentioned *vers. 15, 16, 17.* as might be evinced in many particulars, as need were.

4. Watching in Prayer consisteth in the general, in a wakeful spirit throughout the duty. When the eyes of those which see are not dim in this ordinance, as not in others, but are increased in a right carrying



rying on of the duty, and making holy observations thereupon. *Isai. 32.* So far as any sluggishness stealeth upon us, we are ready to shake it off, and to rowse and raise up our spirits in this holy work. Look as the good Prophet, even whilst the Angel talked with him, was as one in a sleep, and stood in need to be waked to attention, *Zech. 4. 1, 2.* So may it be with our spirits, whilst we talk with the Lord in prayer: we should indeed be of wakeful spirits therein, but oft times we are watchlesse, and spiritually sluggish.

1. In a careful heeding and ordering our expressions in prayer. As not in vow-  
ing, so neither in praying, we are not to be rash with our mouth, careless what expressions we use unto the Lord. *Eccles. 5. 2.* As men that speak to Kings and Princes, weigh all their words heedfully, lest while they seeking to request his favour, provoke him to displeasure by any unseemly and disorderly expressions; so ought men to heed what they speak to the great God of heaven. It is an argument of a stupid, and in a manner atheistical spirit, not to heed what we utter before God in Prayer, so we fill up time with words. It is a high provocation and contempt of the holy One, when men will make so bold with his pure ear & eye, as to use such expressions in speaking unto God, which they would be loath, yet would blush to speak in the hearing of man.

Particularly.  
1 In heedful ordering prayer expressions.

tal men. If of every idle, or frothy, impertinent, unprofitable, unnecessary word spoken at other times, and that unto men. *We must give account at the day of judgment.* *Matth. 12. 36.* And that we must be justified or condemned according to the favourinnesse, solidnesse, and spiritualnesse, or the contrary unfavorinnesse and unsutablenesse of our words, *verse 37.* What may we thinke will be the censure of idle, unsavoury, impertinent expressions used in prayers, if not soundly repented of, if we judge not ourselves for them; if we reform not the same, by a more watchful regard, what and how we speak unto the Lord? When *David* is to pray, *Pf. 141. 2.* he desires the Lord himselfe to set a watch before his mouth, and to keepe the door of his lips. The Saints are very tender, and awful, and solicitous of what they speak in prayer to the Lord; they are sensible of such weight in this duty of watching in prayer, that they thinke it is a work which requireth the skill and wilddoe of God to help therein. *David* is very sensible that he runs many hazzards, if careless and heedless therein, and yet seeth that he hath no sufficiency to set or keep this holy watch at the door of his lips, to take due care what expressions came out of that door, and how many or how few; to restrain and keep in a doors any unseasonable and unsutable words, which with the first would be coming forth even then, when he should be

be most savoury and spiritual. The Saints in prayer they are shooting and darting upwards, and had need to keep their eye on the work as well as on the mark; they had need observe what darts they direct thither, and how they levy them.

2. In attending carefully to the manner of the working of our hearts and spirits in prayer. *David* observed his whole heart to be stirring in his prayer, *Psal.* 119. 58, 145. and what strength of desires he had therein, *verse* 131. *Psal.* 17. 1. He observed how intire and sincere his heart was in his prayer: a watchful Christian will observe whose hands are to the souls petition, whether the several affections, the mind, &c. do joyne therein. And as Musicians improve their musical care in tuning to play; so whilst playing, they listen what strings sound harmoniously, and which are not touched, and sound not at all; so it is here in praying.

2 In observing the workings of our spirits in Prayer.

3. In observing carefully and seasonably what want there is of meet stirring of heart in prayer, and what impediments, and unmeet thoughts, and suggestions, or affections, are stirring therein: the Church and people of God observed, that their spirits were hardned, streightned, and wandering, and complaine thereof: *Why hast thou hardned our hearts from thy feare? Hezekiah* observed, what distrustful thoughts were working with him in his sicknesse, albeit

3 In minding what is wanting or amisse in prayer.

beit he prayed then for recovery, *Isai* 38. 2. compared with *ver.* 9. 10, 11. &c. *Asaph* observed carefully all the passages of his distempered spirits workings, and the distempered reasonings which hee had whilst he sought the Lord, as *Psal.* 77. from the 1. to the 11<sup>th</sup>. verse; and *Psalms* 116. 4. 11. Albeit he prayed for deliverance, yet then he perceived the distempered speeches of his distrustful heart: and the like, *Psal.* 31. 22. A watchful Christian observeth what jarrings are in the harp-strings, the heart-strings (as I may call them) whilst hee is harping, whilst hee is praying, or praying to God. He observeth who would be finger-ring the instrument of his spirit, or the part or strings of it, whilst he is playing, rather praying; he marketh who come in to interrupt his spirit whilst it is speaking to God in prayer. Some intruder will assuredly be crowding in upon the people of God, in their retired discourses with the Lord; but a wakeful spirit espieth and rebuketh them.

4 In observing the hints of grace given in Prayer.

4. In a heedful and wistly observing and viewing, and prying into such spiritual hints, *Items* and motions of God, which he giveth and maketh unto us in prayer, or any divine beames of grace, or glimpses, or smiles of favour, which even in a transient way, we meet withal therein. Albeit the Lord, the Saviour of his people, be but a way-faring man, who maketh very short stays

stages with them, yet a watchful *Jeremiah* observeth and improveth such journeying, travelling calls and stages of the Lord. *Jer.* 14. 8. Sometimes whilst the people of God are asking, the Lord speaketh to them to ask on; and a watchful *David* will hear that, *Psal.* 27. 7. *he was crying, verse 8.* the Lord bids him *seek his face*; he heareth, and doth it, *verse 9. &c.* If but a har-binger, or any post of heaven do but call upon such watchful Christians, they espy them, and inquire more of them. Whilst that *Generation are seeking the face of the God of Jacob*, *Psal.* 24. 6. a motion is made for preparation to entertaine the king of glory in his ordinance. *Lift up your heads yee gates, and the King of glory shall enter in, verse 7.* They heare what was spoken, and inquire farther about the same, *ver. 8. Who is the King of glory?* Now how many drow-sie formalists neglect this holy watch in prayer, in all the severall particulars, we may easily guesse: but I shall leave them to be awakened by the Lord.

Reasons moving the people of God to watching in prayer, may be these:

1. In that the Lord hath gifted his Saints and people with eyes within, fitting them to observe themselves, as in all other actions, so most of all in the acts of his worship; hence those living creatures in the Church are represented with eyes within, when about the worship of God, *Revel.* 4. 8.

&c.

Reasons of watching in Prayer.

1. Because God hath fitted his Saints for it.



&c. They are fools, which when religious exercised, consider not what evil they therein, how vain, or slight, or fit their spirits are therein, *Eccles. 5.1.* the Saints are the wise ones, which have their eyes in their heads, fit to improve themselves in discerning of what passeth, *Eccles. 2.1.* The watch man in the soul of a natural man and hypocrite is blind, or at best sleeping and therefore observeth nor who passeth to and again through the soul; but the conscience of a Regenerate man sitteth upon the Watch-Tower, the candle of the soul is lighted up, his eye is single, he hath the living eye from the Lord.

2. The Lord is an All-seeing God.

2 In that the Lord is a glorious, heavenly, and All-seeing God, and well we then mind what we speak and think in prayer before him. If that we our selves do not observe our hearts, how, or whether, or to what they are carried out in prayer, yet he doth, and he will discover us to our shame, how our spirits were exercised in our prayers, *Psalms 78. 34, 35, 37.* and *James 4. 2, 3.*

3. The Lord is free in his workings and answers.

3 In that God breatheth, or answereth or smileth when he pleaseth. Sometimes when we are addressing our selves to prayer he will hear before we call, *Isaiah 65. 24.* he will meet him that gladly worketh righteousness; even in the half way will he meet such a one. A Suppliant had need then be a man which mindeth and remembereth in

Lord in his wayes, *Isai.* 64. 5. The Prodigal himself when about to sollicite & sue for his Fathers favour, shall perceive his *Father coming to meet him*, *Luke* 15. 18, 19, 20. Sometimes whilst we are speaking in praier, the Lord giveth gracious answers, in the i-tems, and motions, and perswasions of his spirit in ours, *Isai.* 65. 24. Wee had need then in this part of our course, observe the gale of the Spirit of God, and how it wheel-eth about this way or the other, how it turn-eth or returneth in the breathing of it; that we may be ready to catch this prospe-rous wind in the sails of our spirits, and keep still our sails full.

4 In that the enemies of our souls and supplications, do then watch their oppor-tunities to annoy and disturb us in prayer, and to tempt, and to distract us with trou-bulous perplexing thoughts, or to delude us with groundlesse comforts. The Fowles will be lighting on *Abrahams* Sacrifice, but a watchful *Abraham* soon espyeth them, and driveth them away, *Gen* 15. 10, 11.

4. Our souls e-nemies then watch us an ill turn.

5. In that our hearts are naturally slight and slippery, and false in the per-formance of this, as in the practice of o-ther holy duties; they are apt to step aside from the track of such a strait path in the way of Grace. *David* was privy to it, and therefore desireth the Lord to order his steps in the word, *Pla'm* 119. 133. Sometimes the heart

5. Our hearts are then very apt to start a-side.

heart seemeth to be brought to some good bent to God and good, and yet then is apt to crack and start aside; as was said, *Psalm 78.57. David saith, he found in his heart that he might pray to God. 2 Sam. 7. 27.* The light of such a heart by hap, (as we find) or upon serious and long seeking of such a heart, for the Hebrew word will bear both. It is one of the holy chances (if I may call it) that any of us overtake a heart led with holy praying dispositions. It is slippery this way, that if we look not strictly to it, when we think we have got hold and made stay of our wandering spirits (such they are, as far as carnal) yet they will steal away from us, and leave us; and when they are but a little while gone aside, it is very difficult to recover sight or hold them again for such holy impoyment: albeit we should seem to lay a lock and chain upon them, by our holy resolutions and vows; yet verily our hearts have their pick-locks, and the devil for a shift will lend them a file: there is no keeping them from their natural wanderings, without a very strict hand and vigilant eye laid over them. That slippery flitting disposition of heart, which ruleth in hypocrites, doth at least dwell in the dear children of God, so that it is partly in them, which is abundantly fulfilled in hypocrites: their goodnesse, good thoughts and workings in the ways and Ordinances of God, are

sometimes too like unto morning clouds, which mount heaven-ward in appearance, but forthwith vanish out of sight, *Hos. 6.*

4.

6. In that God and Christ watch then to give us a lift in prayer, that our spirits may be more and more elevated, and to be then whispering items of Grace to us, to rescue us from oppositions of the wily enemies of our souls, and the like: he waiteth to be gracious to us then, in hearing and helping us at the voyce of our cries, *Isaiah 30. 18, 19.* He observeth carefully the resistances made by Satan against his *Joshuahs*, *Zach. 3. 1, 2.* As he saith of vowing, we may say of praying, *Say not before the Angel, it was an error*, a carelesse rash expression of our minds. Wee should so carry it before Christ the Angel of the Covenant, in such Religious acts, as those that have been conscientiously heedful, the rather therein; yea in that when we are Religiously exercised in prayer, and such like worship of God, some of the blessed Angels are then and there waiting and observing of us, what we do, and how we carry it; and they are waiting on the Lord there, ready to be employed in any service for our good. As when *Joshuah* is so employed, as Christ was there ready for his succour; so were there some which stood before him, some blessed spirits ready to be commanded in any service for *Joshuah*, *Zach. 3. 1, 2, 4. verses compared.*

There

6. The Lord then doth watch to help and hear us, & Angels too observe and help us.

There is an Angel of God ready at hand whilst *Daniel* is praying, to minister encouragement to him. *Dan* 9. 20, 21. May we well then watch in prayer, when the Lord himself thus waiteth upon us, and blessed Angels are watching the granting of a Commission from God for our good?

7 It much helpeth our comfort and confidence in and after prayer.

7 In that watchings in prayer much helpeth both our comfort and confidence, and after prayer, when hereby we become more assured of our conscionableness in our praying unto God. *Paul* had observed how he was carried in prayer, and that his spirit was duly employed in that service, and therefore dareth to appeal boldly unto the Lord, and call him to witnesse, in whom first he had mentioned the *Romans* in prayer, *Rom.* 1. 9. Our waitings in this of crying and calling upon God, is a pleasure and fruit of Gods waitings to be granted unto us. *Isaiah* 30. 18, 19. verses complete. We may best know the estate of our souls by observing what we are usually in our prayers. *David* gathers by this, he was one of those godly ones set apart for God, *Psa.* 4. 3. Look as skilful persons may gauge the estate of the body by the beatings of the pulses, so may a wise, and judicious, and vigilant Christian, by observing how his spirit usually worketh in prayer.

3. Watching after prayer consisteth,

Watchfulness after prayer doth likewise consist in these four particulars.



1. In diligent attention to keep up such praying Dispositions fresh and lively, which were operative in us, in our prayers. <sup>1. In due care to keep up praying dispositions after prayer.</sup> It is a great part of a Christian's Wisdom, when he hath gotten an advantage against a slight or formal Spirit, or any enemies to prayer, now to stand his ground, and manage his holy Victory; and when his Heart is got upon the Wings, so to keep it; but neither will be effected without a watchful heed thereto. When *David* was in that praying and praying Frame, as one suspecting the Fidelity of his own Spirit, and his own sufficiency to maintain the same, he entreateth the Lord to *keep the same in his servants heart for ever*, 1 Chron. 29. 18. A praying frame is so sweet, that gracious Hearts would ever be in such a plight, if it might be, and they take all the care they can, that they may be so; they therefore crave and improve the faithfulness and wisdom of God for that end. Great is the insufficiency and inability of the best to keep up their own Spirits therein. Even praying *Moses*, albeit he held up long and strongly in prayer, yet his hands wax heavy; such is the infirmity of the best, that they are not able to hold it out long with strength of Elevation of Spirit in any holy exercises. Care must be taken both to keep and hold such a sublimity of Spirit. *Exod.* 17. 12. A stone is brought to bear up *Moses* hands, the strength and stability of

that tried stone, *1 Peter 2.4, 5, 6, 9.* is to be improved by such, which as a *holy Priesthood* would hold on offering acceptable sacrifice of prayer or praise. And as this care is to be took, that whilst we are actually praying, may be thus; so even afterwards, we are to look well to it, that our praying Spirit be not weakened and grow weary, that it be not, slack not, fail not; (as the force of the Greek word beareth, *Luke 18.*) When a motion is made by the Lord to *David*, to hold yet seeking of God as he had already done, he was awake to hear, and improve, and followed the motion. For such is that which is implied in that mentioned passage, *Psal. 118.* compared.

1. In listening after the returns of our prayers.

2. In looking heedfully and hopefully for our prayers, and listening still when he will answer us by his Word and Spirit, accordingly observing how far forth he doth not answer us. *David* he is careful to order his Prayer rightly, so when he hath done to look up, to wait and see what becomes thereof. *Psalms 53.* and *Psalms 85.8.* The Psalmist will hearken (after he hath prayed verse 7, &c.) what God the Lord will speak. Watching after our Prayers for the successe thereof, is as the watching the night-watchman watching for morning, *Psalms 130.1, 2, 5.* O how eager such of the Saints desire the Day-coming the least shews, and our breaking of the Lord Jesus! How earnestly do

attend the scattering of the Night-Mists and Clouds of their troubled, tempted Spirits? How oft doe they look out to espy the least peep of the dawning, and the least out-lookings of the Day-break and Morning-Light? When they have knocked at the Door of Grace, they listen after the least moving of the Door of Grace the least Noise, or News, or Signe, or Pledge of the Gracious Approaches of the Lord to them. Hence is it that on the one hand, when the Lord is silent, or when the Prayers of the Saints take not according to the Desires of the Saints, they observe it, and acknowledge it; as the Prophet, *Lament.* 3. 38. perceiveth that the Lord giveth not such gracious Entrance and Entertainment to his and the Churches Prayers. And, *Psalms* 80. 4. they observe the frowns of the Lord, notwithstanding their Prayers. And, *Isaiah* 26. 16, 18. they observe that no such desired Deliverances were wrought by their Prayers. On the other hand, *Paul* he observeth how long the Lord was silent: he kept true account how oft he sought God without answer given, and then he mindeth the Answer which at length was given. *2 Cor.* 12. 8, 10. They that love the Lord Jesus their spouse, will look after the love-Letters which they have sent, and carefully attend and await the Answer returned. If our heavenly Father should by his Spirit put the question in our hearts, what we have done with our petitions, where we have left them? we may

upon Observation and Knowledge answer  
That we have left them in the Hand  
of the Lord Jesus our elder Brother. And  
if we be questioned how we have disposed  
our Sacrifices, we may confidently answer  
we have delivered them, and left them in the  
hand of our blessed High-Priest, and do await  
the success.

3. In a judicious  
eyeing, examining and  
owning after  
gracious Items

3. In a judicious eyeing, examining and  
owning of after-Items, or Occurrents, which  
in an Answer of our prayers is involved, is  
in secret pacifying of the Heart amidst his  
sad stormy griefe of Spirit; He perceiveth  
gathered that the Lord had *heard the weeping*  
of his weeping, Psalm 6. 8, 9. He observeth  
that after he had prayed against his Enemies  
Plots and Whispers, they did not triumph  
in the attaining of their intended  
chievous Desires, and gathers that the Lord  
did therefore hear his prayer. Psalm  
5, 7, 10, 11. compared: David observeth  
the sweet quiet of Spirit which he had after  
his prayer against the rage of his enemies  
and gathers thereby that the Lord  
heard him, Psalm 3. 1, 4, 5, 6. Paul feelth  
feeble strength in and from the Lord against  
his temptations, and gathereth therefore that  
God had heard his prayer against the temptations  
albeit the Temptations were not removed.  
2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. David being in great  
fear, and rescued and freed of his horrible  
and his Spirit more established in the will  
of God, he teacheth that he waited not for  
the Lord.

answer of prayer in vain, but that he got it at last, *Psalms* 40. 1, 2. he observeth how he is quickned and strengthened with the might of God in his Spirit, and by that perceiveth God had heard his cry. *Psalms* 138.

3. When before prayer he was, as in outward distresse, so in inward streffe and perplexity; and after he had prayed, he perceiveth how he is every way outwardly and inwardly enlarged, he concludeth, That *the Lord hath heard him*, *Psalms* 118. 5. and sundry other like instances might be given hereof.

As Lovers will be opening the Boxes wherein are their Letters, and reading, as the Superscription and Direction on the outside, so that which is written within; so will the Saints be looking into the providences of God, and see and hearken what they speak, and what of God's Minde and Grace in answer to their prayers they may perceive. Or as Petitioners to earthly Lords, will be enquiring of every one of his Attendants and Servants which comes from his presence after their Petitions have been carried unto them, what the Lord saith touching their requests, whether he hath read it, how he accepteth it, whether they bring not the answer thereof from him, and the like? So is it here, Heavens Petitioners will be examining and enquiring into, and of all, after providences occurrent without them, and motions made within, What news from heaven?



4. In a due care to keep the experimental successes of our prayers by us for our holy use.

4. In a vigilant care to keep with us what Answers and Trophies of Prayer we have gained, in safe Custody; and lively and fresh Vigour, Sweetness, and Efficacy. The Lovers of the Lord Jesus, they will keep such Love-Letters and Answers by them, and will ever and anon be reading them over with as much Delight and Content as at the first, and haply at a second perusal and review, they take notice of some precious, pithy passages, that at the first more cursorily looking over, they observed not; and it may be at a third time still they perceive, it breatheth more Love, and more in this that Pathetical Expression, then at a first, yea, or second View they were aware of. Answers of Prayer are like to friendly Tokens of the Lord's special Love to them, as how every vigilant friendly Seeker of Jesus Christ, he owning and looking over and over these bowed pieces of his Coyn, which at this or that time he hath sent them by his or such a good Hand, in such or such an Ordinance, or Providence, or work of his Grace. How will they make Conscience of keeping the Love of the Lord Jesus engraven upon their Hearts, if he was laden with them, and spake kindly to them in Prayer? Oh how they will familiarize with him by reviewing and reviving, and speaking on in their Hearts his last Expressions which he used; a word spoken to them in Mercy, and carefully kept by them, *Luke 8. 15.* incor-

porated

porated into their very hearts, *James 1. 21.* Hence also the Church who had so wished for Christ's company, *Cant. 8. 1. O that thou wert as my brother &c. Ver. 4.* professeth her care to keep Christ with her, and that nothing provoke him to be gone from her, *vers. 4. I charge you. O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up nor awake my Love till he please.* *Paul.* long after that Answer mentioned before, *2 Cor. 12. 9.* he kept the joy of it, witness that joy of his in his Trials, *verse 10. Therefore I take pleasure in reproaches, &c.*

Reasons to move the godly thus to watch after prayer, may be these.

1. In that our Condition is the Condition of Children, Subjects, Servants, Beggars, and therefore we may well attend the good Pleasure of our heavenly Father, Lord and Master, to give Answer to our Requests: the poor are Expectants, *Psalms 9. 18. David* praying to the Lord as his King. *Psalms 5. 3. saith verse 3. He will look up. Psal. 123. 2. As the eyes of servants look unto their masters hand, so our eyes wait upon the Lord, &c.*

2. In that it is certain God will give an Answer of Grace to his Saints Prayers, albeit it may be long first; yea, in that the Lord oftentimes deferreth his Answers, it the rather calleth for our waiting. *Habakkuk* having prayed against the Churches Enemies, *chap. 1. 12, 13, &c. Wherefore lookest thou upon*

A 2 4

them

Reasons of watching after prayer.

1. We are the Lord's Children, Subjects, Servants.

2. Its certain God will seasonably hear.

them that deal treacherously? &c. Chap. 12. faith, *I will stand upon my watch-tower and will watch to see what he will say unto me*: He will use all pains, patience, and vigilancy to observe the issue of his requests; and verse 2. he hath some Answers, *The Lord said unto me, Write the vision, &c. verse 3. The vision is yet for an appointed time, though it tarry wait for it*; and verily, sooner or later faithful prayers do speed. *Isaiah 40. 19. I said not to the seed of Jacob, Strengthen my face in vain. Psalm 85. 8. I will breaken what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his Saints. Micah 7. 1. I will wait for the God of my salvation, for God will hear me. God hath wisely appointed hearing-times, when answers are most sweet and grateful to his Saints, and honourable to him and to his Grace; therefore we may well attend the same. Psalm 5. 3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, (that is, seasonably) and in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. None are led by being the Lord's waiting-men or women. The expectation of the poor shall not perish (fast) for ever, Psal. 9. 18.*

3 It is a sign of mercy towards us, & of grace in us.

3. In that such watching and waiting after our prayers, it is a comfortable pledge of Mercy to us, and Grace in us. Answers of prayer are assuredly neerer us, when we have Hearts to wait for them earnestly and attentively. *Habakkuk* standeth, and fasteth not long upon his Watch-Tower,

not long in that waiting posture, without his answer, as before shewed, from *Hab. 2. 12, 13.* The speaking Vision will come, if we wait for it; and they only whose faith telleth them that God will hear, and will speak peace to his Saints, they *hearken, they wait for him, Micah 7. 7. Psalm 85. 8.* It is a sign that we do truly and sensibly feel the pinching wants of Mercy, and that the Desires of Grace have some Strength as well as Truth in them, when we are so industriously heedful and attentive in listening for Answers of Prayers; they come not idling to Mercies Doors, or as Men who have no weighty Soul-busineses to dispatch: for them, well they might stay there, as Men do in a formal course of prayer, but they would not wait. Waiting Christians make not light of their prayers, but look at them as precious, in that they in such sort look after their Returns, and the Answers of such Messengers.

4. In their Answers of prayer, which by this holy watch are met withal, and observed: They are of all others most precious and useful to us; they greatly enlarge to praise God, and walk worthy of him. *Continue in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving, Col. 4. 2.* Who more thankful then such watching Suppliants, who observe how and wherein God hath heard them? *Psal. 22. 24. When the afflicted cried to him, he heard. Ver. 25. My praise shall be*

4. Its many wayes helpful to us in our praises, faith, and courage.

*be of thee ; and Psalm 116. 1. I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, &c.*  
 Answers of Prayer heeded and observed greatly strengthen and arm a gracious Person against Satan's wily Cavils and Rebukes.  
*Hab. 2. 1. I will watch to see what he will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.* It's pity to see how many precious Souls, which out of Ignorance or Mindlessness of this Duty of Watching, or out of Improvidence and Negligence of reading over these Lines of God's Love, written and sent in, are toyled in Temptations. Answers of Prayer attentively observed, will strengthen our Faith for the future, will much encourage us to pray in greatest straits and saddest hours. *Psalm 6. 9. The Lord hath heard my supplication, the Lord hath heard my prayer.* *Psalm 118. 56. I have called upon the Lord in distresse, and he answered me ; the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can doe unto me.* When we looke not after our Prayers, we and others also lose much of the benefit thereof. Answers of Prayer are in God's intent of publick use. *God spake with Jacob* (say they) when yet he spake with *well* *Jacob*, *Hosea 12. 4. God's hearing of the prayer of the destitute, concerneth all* in like case. *Psalm 102. 17, 18, He will regard the prayer of the destitute. v. 18. His name shall be written for the generation to come.* Much sadder would the Case of many an



afflicted Soul have been, if godly *David* and others had not been watchful, had not observed, and by the Spirits guidance had not recorded the varieties of their Prayer-Cases, Carriages, Conflicts, Comforts, Answers and issues?

5. In that it's the part of the more wise and judicious of the Saints so to do, and that by doing whereof, they grow most in experimental knowledge of the Lord's giving. As the wisest Men, with Men, are those that make most heedful Observations of the Carriages and Issues of humane Transactions, so are they the wisest and experimental knowing Christians, who most attentively minde these holy Transactions betwixt them and God, and between God and them. Hence the Psalmist among other passages, speaking of manifold Answers of Prayer in *Psal. 107. 6. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivereth them*; so verse 13, 19, 28. he closeth the Psalm with this, *Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* To conclude, we would have God to minde our Prayers and Desires of Answers, wherefore look that we heed our Answer of Prayers, & worth the waiting for, *Prov. 13. 12. When the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.* Harvest-answers of Seed-prayers, will fully recompence our pains and patience; and therefore, as other Seed-men, we may well wait for the precious Fruit thereof.

5. Its our wisdom, & means of increase of experimental knowledge.

Now

Helps to such  
holy watching

Now for the third thing propounded. **Helps of such-holy watching, are :**

1. Sobriety.

**1. Sobriety**, which is joyned to prayer watchfulness : *1 Pet. 4 7. Be sober, and watch unto prayer.* Spiritual drunkards, distempered persons with lusts, they regard not what they say, even to God himself. Such as are most moderate and mortified in their thoughts about common matters here below, have little else in minde then their souls, how they prosper in the holy converse and commerce with the Lord.

2. Bodily  
watchfulness.

**2. Bodily watchfulness** : both are aimed under that *Mat. 46. 40. 41. Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.* The eyes in minde are hardly watching when the eyes of body are scarce waking. Now for this end of seasonable hours for prayer, neither too early nor too late.

3. An heaven-  
ly frame.

**3. An heavenly frame of spirit.** Angels are very vigilant. *Mat. 18, 10. Their Angels are always beholding the face of my heavenly Father.* A godly mans watch-Tower is a sublimer station and condition then is usual earthly, sensual, wordly Spirits, are not fit to keep this holy watch.

4. Holy pru-  
dence.

**4. A wise and awful frame of heart,** apprehensive of the weight and worth of prayer, the glory and greatness of God ; an holy ability and skill to espy, discern, and judge of things that differ, whether workings, or motions of the wiser Christians (as I said) are most observant of such things, *Psal. 107. 4.*

5. Composed-  
ness of minde.

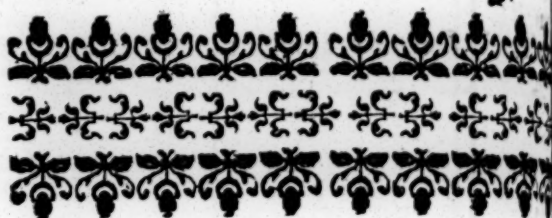
**5. Composedness of minde and thought**

gether with earnestness of desires and deep sensibleness of our present pinching, and pressing necessities. *David* praying in deeps, brings in a night-watchers case, often exposed to extremities; is in a night-watchers posture, watcheth for morning-break of gracious Answers and Items from God, *Psal. 130. 15.*

6. An holy keeping our selves in a constant and general watch of Spirit in other things and passages of our Christian work and way. Watch unto, in and after hearing the word and reading of it, conference about it, meditation upon it, and practising of it, &c. *Deut. 6. 25.* *We must observe all the commandments of the Lord.*

6. Keep up this holy watch in other things.

Part




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PART III.

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I Thes. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

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Cases of Conscience respecting  
P R A Y E R.

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CHAP. I.

*Touching Unregenerate Persons*  
*ers.*

**H**AVING handled the two former  
respecting the Duty it self of Pray  
er, and the modification and  
fications thereof, we now come to the  
of this discourse about prayer, namely

Speak to some Cases of Conscience, considerable in the incessant practise of this Duty of prayer.

The first Case respecteth the persons which are to obey this indefinite injunction; whether onely regenerate persons are bound thus to pray? or that it be not also a Duty which lieth, even upon unregenerate persons to endeavour obedience to this injunction, *Pray without ceasing*: or if such persons should endeavour the practise of this Duty, how far forth they may come up to it, and be carried out in the Obedience thereof; and likewise what successe may come thereof, whether their prayers may not be heard and answered of God, or how far forth. (at least) God may hear and answer, even their prayers? *Quest. I.*

The Case it self doubtlesse may lie sad upon some Spirits, which either suspecting, or concluding, out of some dismal horrors of heart, their estate to be but of the estate of meer natural persons, they question whether the injunction doe lay a bond upon them to obey it, albeit, it may be, they would desire to come up to the obedience of it; especially, considering that the Scripture requireth that such as pray, should pray in Faith, and believe that *they shall receive what they ask.* Mark 11. 24. *Whatsoever ye ask, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* And this they cannot do, finding no assurance of any



any interest in God, nor being able to persuade themselves that Christ died for them in particular; and through this mistake fancy, that there can be no true Faith without such a firm perswasion and assurance that Christ is theirs, (which is rather a reflex then direct act of Faith, and which rather followeth after some time and strength of Faith, acting upon Christ in a house casting the Soul upon Christ alone for Mercy and leaving upon him all the Help and Salvation which they desire:) thus are they kept off, and scarce dare to pray, concerning that they are not qualified and fitted yet for it: they cannot lift up pure Thanks without doubting. Besides, God saith, *the prayer of a wicked man is an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. 15. 1. And they think that they are such wicked ones in themselves, and can or will God take a prayer in good part from such wicked ones as they are? Surely no. Neither will Satan, the Enemy of prayer, neglect the opportunity to present to them the strictest of the qualifications required of such as seek God by prayer, and that unless they could come up to that strictnesse of the Rule, (which is laid strait, that the people of God may by little and little come as near to it as they can) and that forthwith; at first, (beginning about the work, &c. it is not for such as they are to attempt the same; and were it for them to sit still and be

and so would (if possible) take them off from using meanes to be better, and make them reioice never to seek after a better estate then what they are in already; the Devil knowing right well, that God who ordereth such or such an end of good to his people, ordereth such and such good means to be used, for attaining of that end.

But such suspicions of tender hearts, being most what groundlesse surmises, need not, must not discourage any from prayer, in whom the Lord hath wrought a pliable-nesse of heart to the minde of God therein, and a desire to obey his injunction thereof: this is to them an inward call and invitation of God to call upon him. The more tremblingly they set about this duty, with sense both of their own unworthinesse and unfitnessse to perform it, the fitter they are for it. And suppose the worst, that their surmises are grounded, yet verily, the more sad they see or suspect their estate to be, the more need have they to seek God by prayer. When wicked *Simon Magus* did discover the naughtinesse and fallenesse of his heart, *Simon Peter* doth not now forbid him to pray, but he injoyneeth him to pray God, if perhaps the thought of his heart may bee forgiven him. If there be any possibility of a mans salvation, if there bee but a perhaps left of pardon, and that of one at present in the gall of bitternesse, and bond of iniquity; as such a one is bound to  
B b                      repent

repent, so also to pray. *Acts 8. 21, 22, 23.* Some will be ready to put off these injunctions of prayer, as such as concern Puritans; but as for such as they are, what boot is it for them to pray? It was reckoned among the prophane speeches of them of old, *Job 21. 14, 15.* *What profit should we have if we pray to him?* Yea, but some now adayes hold it as their judgement, that it is to no purpose for unregenerate persons to pray; because indeed they are not bound to pray. They were as good joyn in the rest of the speeches there condemn'd and branded for prophaneness, and stand up against the holy Ghost charging the prophane speeches of those unregenerate ones; and maintaine them in it, that they ought not to desire the knowledg of Gods ways, they ought not to serve him, they ought not to pray to him, & therefore may say to God, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledg of thy ways: & who is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit is it if we pray to him?* An unregenerate heart, who of it self is averse from any way of God, and would not be subject to the law of God, would gladly have such a Tenent to hold up against God and his servants, to excuse them from seeking unto God by prayer, as not bound to do it.

Unregenerate  
Persons are  
bound to pray,  
because,

Let us therefore give answer to the several branches of the case propounded, and shew, 1. That an unregenerate person is bound to pray. 2. That such a one may be

be strangely carried out in prayer. 3. That God may hear and answer his prayer.

1. Then, that an unregenerate man is bound to pray, is evident from this indefinite injunction, *Pray without ceasing*; whether regenerate or unregenerate. The wicked man, who *Isai. 55. 7.* is charged to *forake his evil wayes and thoughts*, is first charged, *verse 6. to seek the Lord whilst he may be found, to call upon him whilst he is near. Psal. 65. 2. All flesh shall come to thee,* whether they are good or bad persons.

For First, it is a duty which lieth upon all men, as created and made by God. It is a natural worship. It is that which the law of nature as well as that of the word of God doth put men upon. Hence even the most Pagan people all do call upon some God. *Jonah 1. 5. The mariners cryed every man to his God. Isai. 45. 20. They pray to a God that cannot save.* Among other things contained in the Law, they do this also by nature, *Rom. 2. 14.* If they omit calling upon God, their natural conscience will accuse them for it; or if they do call upon God, it will so far excuse them and incourage them in it, *v. 15.* other naturall men which live under the light of the word, if they neglect it, they sin both against the light of nature, and the light of the word of God. Heathens and other natural men will be damned for this sin of not calling upon God. Hence are they twice imprecated

precatèd againſt, as under that conſideration of not honouring of God, ſo of not calling upon him; as highly ſinning in the one as well as in the other. *Pſal. 79. 6. & Jer. 10. 25. Powre out thy wrath upon the Heathen that know thee not, and the Families that call not on thy Name.* Unregenerate perſons, as well as others, are bound by the firſt commandment, to have no other Gods but God, and therefore bound to worſhip the Lord onely, and no other God but him alone; and therefore to love him and no other God, to fear him and no other God, to truſt in him and no other God, to pray to him and no other God beſide him, &c. as they are bound to make no graven images of God, to worſhip the true God onely with his owne inſtituted worſhip, and not any other of mens inventing; and as they are likewise bound not to take Gods name in vain, &c.

2. It is an inſtituted means of Grace and Bleſſing to them.

2. Prayer is a meanes ordered by the Lord, even for the obtaining of regenerating grace, *Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart will I give you, &c.* compare this with *verſe 27. Thus ſaith the Lord, I will yet for this be ſought (or inquired of) by the houſe of Iſrael to do it for them.* God will give even firſt grace, in the uſe of his own appointed meanes, and that is in a way of ſeeking for it. Hence alſo God owneth this as his own appointed meanes for obtaining other bleſſings of his, as deliverance from dangers, ſupplies



supplies of wants, and the like, albeit the persons which pray are unregenerate. So when Sea-men of all sorts, whether ungodly or godly, are in stormes and dangers, they cry *unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresse*, Psalm 107. 23, 28. If it were simply sinful in them, being unregenerate, to cry and pray to God, he would never thus incourage them, or others in their case, to cry then unto him. 2 Chron. 26. 5. *Uzziah sought God in the days of Zechariah, and when he sought the Lord, God made him for to prosper; if he had been downright godly, he had sought God all his days: yet though an hypocrite (so unregenerate) as long as he doth that which is for the matter of it right in Gods sight, ver. 4. (which is expounded ver. 5. He sought God) God prospereth him. Uzziah did what was right in Gods sight, as Amaziah his father did, which was not with a perfect heart for the manner of doing it, 2 Chron. 25. 2. yet seeking of God even by such a one, whose heart is not perfect with God, is in it self considered, that which is right in Gods sight, and a due and direct means to prosper, in what such a one taketh in hand. Exod. 22. 27. When he cryeth unto me (namely, as one oppressed, as one in necessity, be he who he will be, Regenerate or Unregenerate) I will hear him, for I am merciful. That scoffing lad Ishmael was an Unregenerate*

So Exod 22.  
22, 23 Deut.  
15. 9. & 24. 15.

B b 3

person

person, yet when in distresse, and crying to God, *Gen 21. 17.* *Fear not* (saith the Angel to *Hagar* his mother) *for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is*; if it had been simply sinful, and that which *Ishmael* ought not to have done, the Angel would never have encouraged *Hagar* from such an Argument, as Gods hearing *Ishmaels* cry.

3. God may & doth give them praying abilities to be improved.

3. God may and doth bestow praying abilities upon Unregenerate persons. He giveth to some the gift of prayer, to whom he never vouchsafeth the spirit of prayer. The gift of prayer is as common to hypocrites, as the gift of Prophecie. *Not every one that saith to mee, Lord, Lord,* (is large and earnest in prayer to me) *shall enter into heaven*, *Matth. 7.* Unregenerate Ministers, Magistrates, Parents, Masters, Tutors, may have such a gift of Prayer, by the use whereof others may be instructed, helped and encouraged in a way of Prayer, yea in a right way of prayer; and if he give such a gift, surely he requireth the use of it. That slothful servant, albeit a Reprobate, yet having such a like gift and Talent, he is damned for not improving it, *Matth. 25. 30.*

4. The omission & neglect thereof is charged on them as their sin.

4. That practice or religious performance must needs be a Duty, even of unregenerate persons; the omission or neglect whereof is charged by the Lord upon them for their sin, (for if it were not an Ancient

or Transgression of some rule of God, it could not be sin: ) but the omission or neglect of prayer, or calling upon God, even by Unregenerate persons, is charged upon them by God as their sin; therefore the performance of that service of calling upon God was their Duty. The Assumption is evident: when the Apostle would prove the unregenerate Jew and Gentile to be under sin, *Rom. 3. 9.* he proveth it *verse 11.* by this, out of *Psal. 142.* *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.* And *Psal. 14. 4.* The workers of iniquity have it charged upon their very consciences, as that which they cannot but know to be their sin, *that they call not upon God: Do not the workers of iniquity know, that they eat up my people as bread? They call not upon God;* and *Psal. 104.* It's charged as the pride of the wicked, *The wicked is so proud, that he seeketh not God:* The like charge see *Jer. 10. 21. Hos. 7. 7. Zeph. 1. 6. and Job 27. 10.* The hypocrite that is blamed for ceasing to call upon God (*Will he alwayes call upon God?*) should rather have been blamed for calling upon God at all, if it had not been any duty of his to pray. To like purpose we might argue, That the neglect of it by the Unregenerate, as well as Regenerate Jews, is bewayled by *Daniel*, as their sin: *ergo*, the contrary was their Duty, *Dan. 9. 13.* *All this is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer to God.* Besides

also, if it had not been in it self good, and duty even for an Unregenerate person to pray, but had been in it self sinful; the Psalmist never need to have made that Imprecation against him in *Psal.* 109. 7. *Let his prayer be turned into sin.* Besides, the Psalmist would never have urged God to affright and persecute his enemies by his judgements, that they might at length be forced to seek his name, if it had been in it self sinful, *Psal.* 83. 15, 16.

*Object.* *Prov.* 15. 8. *The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.*

*Answer.* So is the *Plowing of the wicked sin*, *Prov.* 21. 4. Not simply in themselves, for then an unregenerate man should not plow, nor labour in his Calling; yea, he should not eat his meat, nor sleep; &c. For *to the impure and unbelieving is nothing pure.* *Titus* 1. 15, 16. But it is so in respect of the defects of other qualifications required to the holy use and exercise of such things; namely, want of faith, love to God, repentance for sin, &c. *Their Sacrifices were an abomination to the Lord*, *Isai.* 1. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. yet in themselves commanded duties, and enjoined to every Jew, whether he were Unregenerate or Regenerate. God once enabled *Adam*, and in him all his posterity to call upon him; and though hee and we in him are become Bankrupts, and disabled to do that service and homage, yet our Lord and Master may, and doth require

it of us, and accounteth it our sin to neglect it. It is every ones duty to understand and so to believe in God, as well as to seek him; but the omission of that Duty of understanding and believing God, hindereth not, but that the omission of that other duty of seeking God becometh a sin to every one.

*Rom. 3.9, 11.*

2. An Unregenerate man may be strongly and largely carried out in prayer, as its Unregenerate persons may be large in prayers. said of them, *Psal. 78.36, 37.* who did but flatter God with their mouth, for their heart was not right with him; they sought God early, ver. 34. namely, when he slew them, when they were in fear of their lives: So may profane Mariners be very earnest in prayer then, *Psal. 107.28.* Cry unto the Lord. So *Prov. 1.27, 28.* When your fear cometh, &c. then shall you seek me early, but shall not find me. Those in *Isai. 58.2, 3.* they joyned long and large prayers with their Fasts. An hypocritical Pharisee could not spend his time in his Fasting dayes, unlesse enlarged in prayer: *Matth. 6. 16.* those hypocrites that devoured widows houses. they had such a gift in prayer, that they could be very large and long in prayers, *Matth. 23. 14.* And for a pretence make long prayers.

3. Unregenerate persons may be full of praising and thankful expressions in their prayers. The unjustified Pharisees prayer was rather a Thanksgiving, *Luke 18. 10, 11.* They may be large in praying God.

He



He prayed thus, *God, I thank thee, I am not as other men, &c.* Those unregenerate ones among the Jews also, which cried so earnestly, *Exod. 14. 10.* they did sing as loud as *Moses and Aaron. Psal. 106. 12, 13.* Then believed they his words, and sang praises to him; but not rightly, for *verse 13.* but incontinently they forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel; *verse 15.* They lusted in the wilderness, and tempted God in the Desert; of whom the Apostle speaketh, *1 Cor. 10. 9.* Only lest what is now said, may raise some doubt in the hearts of any truly Regenerate, the example of the Pharisees thankful Prayer, will yeild matter of distinction and differencing of the Unregenerate person in his praises from the Regenerate.

Differences  
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thanksgivings  
of the Unrege-  
nerate, and  
those of the  
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1. The Unregenerate person in his thanksgiving before God, pretending to lift up God in his praises, doth intend to lift up or exalt himself. Hence Christ, who knew the spirit of this Pharisee in his praises of God, rendreth him thus, *Luke 18. 14. Whosoever exalteth himself.*

2. The main in their eyes, and loin their thanks, is some inherent excellency, not those imputed mercies, not Christ and his Righteousnesse, and propitiation, and the pardon of sin, Gods favour, acceptance, &c. No word of these in the Pharisees thanks, but that *I am not as others, unjust; I fast, I pay Tythes, &c.* They are the Saines, whole

whose hearts being most affected with those mercies, do break out into cordial prayers for them.

3. Such men use to rest in some common eminencies and excellencies above others. The Pharisee passeth others, he is *not as other men*, and that sufficeth him: no word of a serious petition for the supply of such or such wants, of this or that grace, or for the increase thereof, or for the subduing of such or such corruptions. Hee grounds his rejoycing upon anothers falling short of him, upon others falls into such sins from which he is restrained; as *Gal. 6.4.* He *shall have rejoycing in himself, and not in another.*

4. Such men respect more the gift, then the Giver; and trust more in that, then in him. They trust in themselves that they are righteous, when they say, *God, we thank thee*, Luke 18.9, 11. compared. They make the gifts their God, and they adore and admire the Giver onely for the gifts sake, & do not admire the gifts for the Givers sake, as true Converts, and Spouse-like spirits use to do, but harlot-like they do otherwise.

5. Such men are very ambitious in their thankful acknowledgments. They make Gods praises but as a stirrup to get up into mens esteemes, and as a bridg by which to convey to themselves humane praises; Hence this Temple-acknowledgment,  
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and in the most conspicuous place of it.

6. Such men will in the midst of their thanksgivings, be with heart and mouth too (sometimes) censuring, and putting contempt upon others, falling short (as they conceive) of their excellencies; yea, albeit those other be better men then themselves, as this gracious Publican was, then the Pharisee: so saith this seemingly thankful Pharisee, *God I thank thee, I am not as this Publican*, nor such a varler, nor such a wretch. &c.

3. They may pray with some kind of faith.

3. Unregenerate men may bee carried out with some faith, as well as fervency in their prayers. As *Luke 17. 12, 13, 14, 15, 17.* The nine, as well as the tenth, who was truly gracious, cry as loud as he, and believe as strongly upon the word of Christ as he, that the Lord Jesus had granted their request of healing, and go a great way to *Jerusalem* as men already cured, to shew themselves to the Priest (as the manner then was) when yet they were not then actually cured; they set forward in the journey upon that errand, upon confidence of Christ's word, as if they had been cured at the very instant wherein he spake, and yet not at that very instant, but afterwards, even as they journied towards *Jerusalem* from that part of *Samaria*, were they actually cured. As an unregenerate man, one who hath not love, may have the gift of the faith of miracles, so as to remove mountains, *1 Cor. 13. 2.* So may they exercise that faith in such



a way, expecting answers of prayer in cases of wonder. They that cast out devils, did it by invocation upon the name of the Lord, accompanied with such a faith for hearing them, and helping them. *Mat. 7. 22. And in thy name cast out devils.* And as an unregenerate man may have that common temporary faith, *believe for a time, Luke 8. 13.* So may he for such a time act such a faith in prayer, or the like, albeit it be in matters onely of a common nature, and not such as are properly saving; as for clearing up pardon of sins, subduing secret corruptions, sanctifying of afflictions, an holy rescue or issue from temptations, or the like.

Touching the third thing propounded, I say, God may in some sort, and in some cases hear unregenerate mens prayers; both such prayers as they put up to the Lord with others, or by themselves alone. Prayers put up by them with others, may be heard in a saving way and manner by the Lord; albeit not in a saving manner to themselves, yet in a saving way to the Saints which joyne with them in the prayers which they put up. *Matthew (chap. 3. 5, 6.)* saith, *the Centurion came unto Christ beseeching him to heal his servant: but Luke 7. 3, 4, 5. expoundeth it, that he sent to the Elders of the Jewes to beseech Christ to do it; he joyned with them in the request; it was his, but it was presented by those proud hypocritical and unregenerate Elders, who breached*

God may be said in some sense to hear their prayers, praying with others.

thed none of the Centurions faith, or humility, as appears by their plea with Christ from the Centurions worthiness, saying, *that he was worthy that he should do this for him*, yet the Lord Jesus heard, & graciously answered the good Centurions hearty desire, & consent to the substance of the prayer. They then presented the poor palsie man to Christ with a tacite desire of cure, had (some of them at least) a faith of miracles for his cure, but the man himself no doubt had a further desire, even of his soules cure, with the pardon of his sins: and when Jesus saw their faith, Mark 2.5. he saith to the sick of the palsie (as Matthew hath it, chap. 9.) *Sonne, be of good cheare, thy sins be forgiven; the man's grievous disease might trouble his friends, but this was his greatest trouble, in the want of pardon of sins; and his desire and faith was accordingly carryed out, and the soul-mercy of his pardon and peace is given in as an answer in common to them all. When he saw their faith, he saith to the palsie man, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Abiathar who proved a treacherous and bad man (1 Kings 2.26.) yet if he made inquiry of God for his counsel about distressed David, (1 Sam. 30. 7, 8.) or about David in a strait, (2 Sam. 2. 1.) God giveth a gracious answer for David, who by him seeketh unto the Lord for his counsel; and surely the desires of faith are acceptable to God, and successful, whether expressed in others prayers,*

prayers, wherein believers joyne, or in their own alone. *Psalm 145.19. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him:* The fruit of no one ordinance of God doth depend meerly and onely upon the worthiness and goodnesse of such as chiefly act in it. Christ authorized the twelve Disciples, and *Judas* among the rest, *to preach the Gospel. Matth. 10.4,7.* And so, as that if they came to worthy ones, humble souls, ready to receive their doctrine, *their peace was to come upon them, verse 13. If the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it,* even all kind of blisse to their souls also, which you petition for in your prayers, and hold forth in your preaching, that shall come upon it. Let the Preacher be unworthy himself, yet if the hearers be worthy, *their peace cometh on them.* The Gospel, and Gospel-ordinances are the power of God to salvation to the believing hearer and partaker, be the Minister regenerate or unregenerate. The cup in the Lords Supper, *is the Communion of the blood of Christ* to the worthy receiver, be the Minister, whom the people called to dispence the same to them, regenerate or unregenerate. *1 Cor. 10, 16.* and so in praier: Gods compassions are to his peoples miseries; for redresse whereof, the prayer is made, be the man that is the mouth of the people therein, Godly or ungodly. Notable is that example of wicked *Jehoahaz, 2 Kings 13.4. Jehoahaz besought the Lord,*  
and,

and the Lord heard him : for he saw the trouble of Israel wherewith the King of *Aram* troubled them. Nor would God ever shew such respects to prayers put up by unregenerate persons in behalf of his people or any of them , if it were ( as some say ) a sin to joyne with an unregenerate Minister , Parent, Master, Husband, &c. in their prayer. And since every Hypocrite, how godly soever he is taken to be by the most judicious Christians, yet he is an unregenerate person, if an hypocrite; and since he that we judge to be truly godly , yet its very possible he may be an hypocrite, we cannot be infallibly sure in any ordinary way, of anothers saving estate , but onely in the judgement of charity we may esteeme such of such a one truly godly : so that if we sinne if we joyne in prayer with an unregenerate person , we cannot assure our selves but that we sin in joyning with any other at all, because we cannot ordinarily be so assured, that another with whom we would pray, is regenerate ; and so a man must now turn an absolute separatist indeed.

Praying by  
themselves  
also.

As for other prayers, which do more personally respect themselves , and are uttered by themselves, albeit the parties be unregenerate , yet the Lord may hear the same ; the Lord as a Master , grants the request of that hypocritical servant , though not as a Father , *Matth.* 18. 26, 17. and verse 32. *O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee the debt, because*

*because thou prayedst me, &c. So those rude* They are then  
*mariners, crying in distresse, are heard of the* heard.  
*Lord, Plal. 107. 28. So was mocking Ishma-*  
*el heard in his cry, Gen. 21. 17. God may,*  
*and doth put forth wonderful workes for*  
*persons which cry to him, as they are the chil-*  
*dren of men, albeit not as the children of*  
*God, many of them. Psal. 107. 15, 21, 31.*  
*O that men would praise him for his wonderful*  
*works which he doth for the children of men!*  
*Though those that sought him when he slew*  
*them, had not hearts right with God, Psalm*  
*78. 34, 36, 37. compared, yet he being full*  
*of compassion forgave their iniquity, (i. e.*  
*as to the punishment deserved by it, even*  
*utter ruine, he passed over that,) he destroy-*  
*ed them not utterly, verse 38. God liketh al-*  
*so to own the righteous causes even of un-*  
*righteous persons, and to set himself against*  
*their affliction. Job 34. 27, 28. They have*  
*caused the cry of the poor to come to him, and*  
*he hath heard their cry. So Exod. 22. 22, 23.*  
*Though many of the children of Abraham,*  
*of Isaak and Jacob in Egypts bondage, were*  
*themselves unregenerate, yet they crying*  
*also, were heard, out of respect to their*  
*godly Ancestors, and the covenant of God*  
*made with them, Exod. 6. 5. I have heard*  
*the groanings of the children of Israel, and*  
*have remembered my covenant. Sometimes*  
*God heareth such persons prayers the ra-*  
*ther, that they may afterwards bee instru-*  
*ments of his peoples good; and sometimes*  
*Cc that*



that he might the rather incourage all sorts to pray to him. *Psal. 65. 2. O thou that hearest prayers, to thee shall all flesh come.* Sometimes the persons at present unregenerate, yet are elect, and God in hearing them, will look to his own thoughts of prayer which he hath towards them, and so will be found of those which sought him not aright.

But in case the parties bee reprobates, what hearing God doth afford to any prayers of theirs,

In common,  
not in things  
properly saving.

It is first in common things, and such which (at least) are not properly saving mercies unto them, for so God heareth not sinners. If any object, that evil servants pardon granted upon his request, *Mat. 18. 32.* I answer, the Master forgave him the debt, not simply, but in respect of the consequent vassalage and imprisonment presently deserved by it. *Mat. 18. 25.* or as some interpret the place, to be spoken in reference onely to the main intent of Christ, that if a man forgive not his neighbour offending, and begging his mercy, God will never communicate to him any saving benefit of his mercy in Christ. An implacable spirited Christian is at present in a state of damnation.

By God as a  
Master, not as  
a Father.

2. The hearing which the Lord doth lend to such, is from his general providence and pity, and rather as a Sovereign and Master, then from any particular grace, and

and as a Father; for so he heareth not sinners; yea he heareth them, rather to leave them without excuse, and to take a fuller blow at them afterwards, as in the case of that evil servant, *Matthew 18.* the end.

3. The Lord useth not to give any substantial grace as the success of their prayers; so he heareth onely Saints, and not sinners, especially reprobates; he changed not the servants heart with his condition, *Mat. 18.* nor theirs, *Psal. 78. 37, 38, 39.* They receive not Grace answerable.

4. God sometimes heareth them in displeasure and anger. *Hosea 13. 10, 11.* They are heard in wrath.  
*I gave them a king in mine anger. Psal. 106.*

15. *He gave them their desire, but sent leanness into their soul;* their soul is blasted, they were hardened in pride and security thereby, and the thing it self given is blasted to them in the use of it, becoming a snare, and vanity, and in the deprival of it vexation of spirit.

## CHAP. II.

### *Touching Distractions in Prayer.*

**W**E are now to proceed to other cases of Conscience, arising in the incessant carrying on of the weighty duty of prayer. The second case now to be handled

is, touching Distractions, or Impertinent thoughts, and workings of spirit, which disturb and molest us in prayer: wherein, demand will be made of three things.

*Quest.*

General causes of distractions in prayer.

Satan.

Touching, 1. The Causes, 2. The Cure, or remedy thereof. 2. The successe of such prayers, wherein such distractions are found.

Touching the first we say, the causes of such distractions are either such as are more general or more particular. The more general causes are two.

1. Satan, that enemy to prayer, the Author of all confusion, and so of this confusion of the spirit in prayer; that fowle who stealeth away what is spoken to the heart by God in the word, he is as busie to steal away the good motions of the spirit, stirring us up to speak to God in prayer. Satan is at hand to tempt, when we are in hand with prayer. If we will draw neer to God in praier, we may expect the tempter to approach some way or other to disturb us, by some sinister subtle suggestions or other. Wee must resist the devil in such like distracting motion, when we are drawing nigh to God. *Jam. 4. 7. Resist the devil, and hee will flee from you. And verse 8. Draw neer to God, &c.* If we will pray with all manner of prayer, we had need be arm'd against such like wily assaults of Satan, which tend to annoy us therein, *Eph. 6. 11, 18. compared. Look as Act. 16. 16, 17, 18.* Till when the Apostle and his company were to go to prayer, the devil in his instrument

ment, the maid possessed, maketh a disturbance with her impertinent speeches; so is there, if the devil can help it, something or other shall be set on work to breed distraction, or occasion disturbance to us in prayer, or he himself will be suggesting something to molest us.

2. The unregenerate part of man. When at any time we should do any good, whether it be to pray, or the like, evil will be present with us, as he complained, *Rom. 7. 21.* *When I would do good, evil is present with me:* that sink of natural corruption will then especially cast out its unflavoury smells, when so raked into by holy humble acknowledgments and deprecations; this dunghill will then be sending out his vapours, even when the heart is heated and warmed in prayer by the spirit; when a commanding power of grace is stirring in the heart, the unregenerate part will be raising these mutinies. *Rom. 7. 23.* *I see another law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind: Paul found it so, and who doth not find it so in continual experience? If the spirit do break any long silence in the heart, and will be speaking, corruption will talk as loud as the spirit, and if it can, drown the noise and voice of the spirit, that the heart may not distinctly hear what the spirit doth teach the heart to speak to the Lord. The flesh will be lusting against the spirit, so that we cannot speak to God, or do any service*

2. The unregenerate part in man.

for him, in so free and spiritual manner as we (as regenerate) do desire. *Gal. 5. 17.* All evil thoughts which boyle out of the spirit, rise out of that inward spring, and so these evil thoughts which disturb us in prayer, they spring from the same fountain, *Mark. 7. 21. out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, &c.* The unregenerate part in the best, savoureth not such a spiritual way of God, as is the conscionable exercise of our selves in prayer, that begetteth that natural slipperinesse in spiritual things; whence it is that good motions are not so rooted, and dwell not so long with us. This is that which would be breeding and feeding a disposition in the best, to be soon satisfied with spiritual things, and so to abate of the earnest, and intent pursuit after the same. The strength of this natural Byas will too oft shew it self in the Saints, that whilst their spirits are carryed out with some might of the hand of the spirit of God towards the mark in prayer, this draweth the mind away, and the deceitful heart of many will bee slyly flinging something or other in the way to cause a rub, and to slack or divert the strait course of a regenerate man in prayer.

Particular  
causes thereof.

1. Natural  
hypocrisie.

More particular causes of such distractions in prayer, are these:

1. Natural hypocrisie, and falsenesse of heart; want of soundnesse in the feet of our affections, will make us go crippling and



and blundring, and stumbling, even in this plaine even way of prayer; and a small push will turn us aside, and cause the mind and heart to divert from the holy way, in which they were going. *Heb. 12. 13. lest that which is lame, be turned out of the way.* And as *Prov. 18 7. As the legs of the lame, so is a parable in a fools mouth:* a fools mouth cannot, will not utter spiritual things so closely and concisely, but will be intermingling impertinences; so is it here, so far as this sinful guile, (which indeed is but folly) doth take place. As where ruling hypocrisie doth possesse a man, that man is very fickle and unstable, he is in and out, off and on, in every thing he saith or doth: now he will be as one speaking or doing well, and now again the contrary. *James 1. 8.* That double minded man is unstable in all his wayes: so is it in part, where tyrannizing hypocrisiedomineereth over any poor soul, it will cause many diversions, and much unsteadinesse in the mind in the best services. Where the spirit is hypocritical, there will the heart and mind be constantly gadding, and far off, when the lips are neer God in seeking of him. *Jer. 12. 2. Thou art neer in their mouth, and far from their reines.* And *Matth. 15. They draw neer me with their lips, but their hearts are removed far from me.* When the heart is divided, as *Hosea* speaks, *chap. 10. 2.* surely the mind will bee so too. That part of man which is not

for God, will never be long with him, but ever starting from him in any Ordinance, and so in this. Though the heart, as sincere in part, put the mind upon thinking of suitable things to the prayer in hand, yet the heart, as wily and guileful also in part, will be imploying the mind in other thoughts also: and so far as there is division of mind, there is a distracted mind, or a mind drawne diverse ways.

2. Distrustful  
care.

2. Distrustful care for outward things. Thence is the mind as a meteor (as is the Greek phrase, *Luke 12. 28, 29*) pendulous and wavering; now up, now down; now turning this way, now that, keeping no certain course in this, or in any other way of God. Look as that care of his about his Inheritance, distracted his mind in hearing God speak to him, *Luke 11. 13, 14.* (whence that interruption of Christ in his preaching.) *Master,* (saith one then) *bid my brother divide the inheritance:* so doth the like cause work a like effect in our speaking to God in prayer. It is a sad and dangerous character of a thorny Professor, when constantly as any seed of the Word is shooting up in any Ordinance, such thorny distempers and distractions spring up with it, *Luke 8. 7.* Yea, when they commonly over-top the same, and good things in prayer, hearing, meditation, &c. come thereby to be choaked and stifled in our minds or hearts. When the

the minde is in a manner drunk with cares of this life, it will go on reeling and staggering in the choicest pathes of God: or if from such a worldly spirit, we make rash and sudden irruptions unto Prayer from heat of worldly busineses, when the mind but then was reeking hot, and sweating in them, the steam and savour thereof will surely annoy us in prayer so soon after: our busineses, which we talked with so earnestly but then, they will be calling after us again, as having somewhat more to say to us. The vessels of our minds will taste too much of that strong liquor, which can hardly be emptied out so soon. Look as it is with a man, who is not thoroughly waked from sleep, his head is most apt to be filled with fumes, and his tongue to speak impudently: so is it here, when we are not thoroughly rowzed from carnal occasions and thoughts about them; our minds will be full of impertinent thoughts. And as other dreames come from multitudes of busines, and busyings of the mind, *Eccl. 5. 2, 3.* so here, from such like busyings of the minde but then, we shall pray but dreamingly and distemperedly. When we have been so intently studying but then, such a point respecting the world, we shall not so soon be drawn to think so intently and fixedly on better subjects.

3. Discontent with our present condition. As discontented *Jonah*, how is his Prayer

3. Discontent.

prayer stuffed with distempered expressions springing from distempered thoughts, *Jon. 4.1,2.* Grace and discontent pulled *Rachel's* spirit divers wayes; now tumultuous thoughts against her husband, now envious thoughts against her sister, and now betwixt motions of the Spirit to counterwork the same: so that she in that case might be said to be in great wrestlings in prayer also, *Genesis 30.8.* Discontent is a mutinous distemper, and will be casting tumults, even in our best times of praying, &c. *All the days of such afflicted ones are evil, Pro. 15.15.* Discontent, as a mighty vapour in the heart that is pent in, and there hath lyen long, will at length be breaking out, and will cause Earthquakes in the heart of long continuance, which will strangely vary the motions of the heart this way and that way, and oft-times rend it. It will make a man mentally, ever wandring, and so lyable to all sorts of temptations, at all times, and in the best Ordinances, *Prov. 27.8.* *As a bird wandring from her nest, so is a man wandring from his place.* Discontent taking off the minde from its basis and center of quiet submission to Gods mind and will, the mind knoweth not where to fix. A discontented Christian is neither pleased with himself, nor any thing he hath or doth, no not with his very praying; and no wonder then if so distempered in it. The ground of discontent is distrust: and

and what is of a more wavering nature then that? It maketh a man like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest so long as such blasts are upon his minde. It maketh the workings of his minde like the waves of the sea, very independent, and sometimes thwarting each other. *Jam. 1. 6. Nothing wavering*; that is, nothing doubting or distrusting, which is indeed the wavering of a troubled Sea-wave

4. Inordinacy of affection, whether of desire, or fear, or love, or joy, or grief, or anger, &c. The Lord Christ when to raise *Tabitha*, he will put out the *Minstrels and the mourners*, which made a confused noise; no good to be done unless these be stilled. No raising up of a dead spirit in prayer, unless all such inordinacies be secluded. Such inordinacies in the heart will hurry the minde with them, and make that inordinate too. If they give respite to the minde to be busied a little in any Ordinance, yet they cannot spare or forbear its service long. They carve and cut out so much work for the mind, that it can scarce have leisure for more spiritual Imployment. Yea, the very mouth and tongue, which should be in any Ordinance as the *pen of a ready writer*, shall be ever and anon jogged by them; yea, they will be inditing, suggesting and inserting ever and anon their matters, whilst the spirit of a sanctified Christian is inditing the more weighty messages of the soul to be dispatched to heaven by this sure and speedy

4. Inordinacy of affection.



dy Messenger Prayer ; and its well, through the tumultuous noise of these distempers, the minde be not so disturbed, that men sometimes in prayer speak non-sensical. And as in Feaverish distempers, the patients thoughts are slippery, slighty, and independent, and their discourses accordingly full of impertinencies: So is it here amidst those feaverish distempers of the soul. Inordinacies of Affection they are the soules Diseases, and a Christian sick of such Diseases, will be followed ever and anon with impertinencies of thoughts in best services.

5. Lust.

5. Any spirit of Lust. This maketh Christians of good hopes, as clouds which are driven hither and thither of contrary winds. Jude calleth those *lascivious professors*. *Clouds carried about of windes*, Jude 12. also *wandering Stars*; their mindes cannot be fixed and intent in any Duty of piety. They do not, cannot keep in the right Ecclesiastical Line, but wander from that constant course which Jesus Christ the Sun of Righteousness constantly kept. That wild-fire will be burning, whilst the Incense of prayer is offering and burning. Look as it is with the boiling pot, the scum of it will be rising up, together with the meat therein: So is it here, even when a Christians heart is or should be boyling up good matter in prayer, such a filthy scum as this is, will be rising up in the spirit together with it. Or as its said of the Harlot, *She watcheth her times to call and*

intice passengers to her, which were going right on, Prov. 9. 15. So is it here, these Bawds and Panders in the soul, they will be inveagling and inticing the mind and heart, to withdraw the same from their intent going on in prayers, or any other good way of God, to the end that they may be nought with them. As its said of that old Beldam and grand Strumpet, Concupiscence; A man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed: So is it here, in this daughter of that mother of Fornications; it will be inticing the soul, and drawing it away from any way of God, and then tempt it.

6. A spirit of Error, This maketh Christians also like clouds, as *Jude* speaketh of erring persons, *Jude* 8. 12, 13. Unclean Opinionists, they are or will be *Dreamers*, as *Jude*s phrase is, *These are filthy Dreamers*, dreaming continually in every thing they say or do. Their thoughts will be incongruous in their best employments. As it is with persons benighted, they are aptest to wander from any right path wherein they were going: so is it with a mind benighted and bemitted with darknesse of error; that mind will hardly keep on its way in prayer, or any other Ordinance long, but will have his sinful vagaries. Or as a man whose head is filled with wine or strong drink, his head being giddy, he goeth reeling along: So is it with Christians besotted with error, their

their giddy brains will not suffer them to be solid, distinct, exact, and intent in their thoughts in the good wayes of God; they will be stumbling with their feet, and stammering with their tongue, making at best but rude and broken work of it in their prayers and performances. Such persons are ever unstable souls; *They beguile unstable souls*, 2 Pet. 3. Their very minds are unstable in any thing that is good. *They are vain in their imaginations*, Rom. 1. Bane the spirit of confusion of minde, head and way, is where a spirit of Error dwells.

7. Family contention.

7. Family-contention. It is a common dropping Prov. 19. 13. It will make breaches into the very spirit also of the other yoke-fellow; yea, divide and distract it in prayer as well as other services. 1 Pet. 3. 7. In orderly dwelling together of Christian yoke-fellowes, this is adjoyned, *Their prayers be not hindered*; neither by distracting your spirits who are to joyne in prayer, nor by distasting the Lord, so that he will not give a ready answer thereto. It's hard for him who is in the Family to mind the cases of each one therein, but in minding the contentions therein, some distempered thoughts will be arising in him. If the very repetition of an offensive matter passing betwixt two friends, is so apt to breed a fresh distance, by renewing the former apprehensions of the offensiveness thereof.

thereof ; Whence that *Prov.17.* *He that separateth a matter separateth chief friends* ; then in the best men, and in the best duties, it is a wonder if reminding and rementioning family contentions, there be not found some tang and touch of distempered movings and musings.

8. Spiritual drowlinesse, sluggishnesse, & Sluggishness and flightiness of heart. When heart and mind is of a droulie temper, it is of a dreaming temper, full of impertinent fancies, even when to be imployed in prayer, or the like ; yea, if both body and soul be not in a waking and watching plight, the soul will be apt to be hurried with impertinencies, temptations. *Matth.26.41.* *Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.*

Now touching the second thing propounded, even the Remedies of such distractions in prayer. Let but diligent heed be taken, and conscionable indeavour used against each of the former occasions and causes thereof, and it will help to redresse the same. Espy out and bewaile the secret guile and wiliness of heart, get your heart rid of those distrustful cares, of that Discontent and inordinacy of affection ; banish that spirit of Lust and of Errour from your souls, beware of that family contention, and that spiritual or corporal supineness, and you will in a good measure get rid of such distractions in prayer. But yet for our better help herein,

Remedies against distractions in prayer.

1. Make

Holy preparation  
unto  
prayer.

1. Make conscience of holy and due preparation of our selves unto prayer. *Exod. 34. 3. Moses* must come alone to God and leave the flocks. *Jacob* ferrieth over all belonging to him on the other side of the river, before he wrestleth with the Angel. *Gen. 32. Abraham* leaveth the servants, and the Asses at the foot of the hill, when he go to sacrifice to the Lord, *Gen. 22. David* had got his heart into a very serious and fixed frame, for that praising part of his prayer; and yet as thinking that all too little, saith, he will yet rouse himself up to that work, *Psal. 57. 7. O God my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise: and verse 8. I my self will arise right early.* So good *Deborah* rowleth up herself again to powre out praises to the Lord, *Jud. 5. 15. Awake, awake Deborah, awake, awake a song.* A gracious heart should think it self never enough awaked to such holy work, experience of Saints will prove it: and when they can by grace get their minds and hearts a little sequestred to consider seriously of the work they are going about, and of God and Christ before whom they come, and of themselves who are to come before the Lord, and the like, before they actually addresse themselves to solemn prayer; how intently, and spiritually, and strongly they are wont then to be carried through the duty, and all other times, when they more suddenly and inconsiderately set upon pray-



er, how unprofitably they are wont to spend such a time; and how many hurries of spirit, this way and that way, they are cumbred with, and much ado to make any thing of it at such times.

2. Spiritual wisdom is another help; <sup>2. Godly wisdom.</sup> Godly wisdom will choose places for prayer, which are freest from any distracting occasion: Hence Christ so often repairs to the mountain to pray. Wisdom will seasonably discern a deluding, cheating thought, yea, though it come with its vizard, or with its painted face, wearing in view the very livery of our heavenly Father; and much readier will it espy other thoughts, which would slyly withdraw our mindes by little and little from the present business of our souls. *Wisdom is before him that hath understanding, Pro. 17. 24. whilst the fools eyes are wandring in the corners of the world.* The wise Christian keeps his eye from gadding after vain objects, and keeps it rather intent upon wisdoms works and ways. *The heart of the wise is at his right hand, the instrument of action, Eccles. 10. 2.* He hath his heart and spirit at an holy beck, to be employed as wisdom shall direct; as there is need of the exercise of thoughts, or desires, or grief, or joy, or fear, or anger, in an holy way or work, a truely wise Christian hath them at hand to do their several homage to the Lord, being thereto commanded by his spirit. *The wise mans eyes*

are in his head, Eccles. 2. 14. The truly wise Christian hath the ready and seasonable use of the eyes of his mind and understanding: holy thoughts and apprehensions are not to seek when the Lord calleth for the use thereof, as in prayer or the like; but they are then active, and so ready to keep out worse or unjust thoughts. A wise Christian being also privy to his own inability to keep his heart close to God, he betaketh himself to the Lord, as he did, *Psal. 85. 11. Unite my heart to fear thy name.* He would have the Lord to keep his heart close to any part of his fear or worship, that it scatter not, wander not therefrom. Intruders cannot get in unseen, and untaken notice of, whilst this lightness, watchful grace is employed, as they will in darker places. This skilful Pilot at the helm, by keeping its eye upon Gods compass, avoids many yawes, and much lee-way in a gracious Christians course, in prayer, or otherwise, which other unwise Christians make.

3 Watchfulness.

3. Watchfulness, which is the seasonable and practical use of that holy wisdom upon every occasion. This will be examining such a knock at the door of the heart, whilst the spirit is talking with God in prayer. Those godly Church-officers described, *Revel. 4. 6, 8.* with their eyes before and behinde, and within also, to observe all without, and as well also within themselves, they go on uninterrupted in the worship

worship of God, as though their cry was but one and the same; continued cry night and day: *They rest not night nor day, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which is, and was, and is to come.* This pondering the path of our feet, is a help to going right on in this or any other way of God without diversions from it, or stumbling in it, *Prov. 4. 26. 27. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left;* the former is the means to the latter. A good watch at the City gates, the outlets and inlets of suggestions to the minde, or motions from it, will keep us from trouble-Cities, such trouble-Souls, as are these distractions, and help rid them of such Vagrants as they are. Such holy careful oversights of the banks, will prevent the dividing of the streams and issues of our minds (even our thoughts) that they run in no other chanel and way then is meet for them. When we go to prayer, we are assaying by the ladder Jesus Christ to climb up to heaven, and this holy care of our feet keeps them from slipping, and us from falls. *Look to thy foot when thou goest into the house of God,* namely, to worship God in prayer or otherwise, *Eccles. 5. 1.* When we go to pray, we go spiritually to plow, and this holy minding of our work, and our hand, helpeth to keep us in our right furrow.

4. Heavenly  
ness of heart.

4. Holiness and heavenliness of heart. The nature of prayer is a lifting up of the heart; the more elevated that is therefore, the more fitted to pray aright. Who more free from any distractions in prayer, then Christ the holy one of God? Who go on more straight in their holy course without any digressions, then those heavenly spirits described, *Ezek. 1. 9.* A heavenly heart is so much in heaven at other times, and on other occasions, that it will be very loathsome to it to be then in earth, when to be so solemnly exercised in so heavenly a discourse with God: Holy things and thoughts are made so natural to such a soul, and so familiar to it, that they will more easily be spoken with, and more readily be speaking with us in prayer. God hath such a ones heart, and therefore his eyes will be fixed and intent upon this or any other away of his. *Prov. 23. 26. My son give me thy heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.* Such a heart is filled with spiritual materials; and when well warmed in this, or other like holy exercises, it will boil up little else but good matter, as he said, *Psalms 45. 1. My heart bosleth up* (so it is in the Hebrew) *good matter*; and such a ones tongue will be also as the pen of a ready writer, not often making so much as a wry dash, in presenting the souls occasions before the Lord, *ibid.* As a well builded ship deeply and richly laden, heeleth

not so much, nor m keth not so many  
yawes, and is not put to it to make so many  
boards and tacks to recover and keep its  
course, but will lye nearer the winde, even  
when its scant, and keep a straiter course  
then other vessels: So is it here with a well-  
composed, well-principled heart, it will  
steer a straiter course, and freer from di-  
gressions and distractions in prayer. Or as  
a person that hath his pocket filled with  
pieces of Silver, and here and there a brass  
farthing possibly amongst it; if he be to  
trade for wares, will mostly pluck out silver;  
whereas another that hath most brass mo-  
ney in his purse, and very little silver, will  
hardly pull out any other then brass: So  
is it here, when spiritual and heavenly min-  
ded Christians are to trade with God in  
prayer, they present little else to the Lord  
then what is spiritual and suable to their  
work in hand. *Out of the good Treasure of  
their hearts, they bring forth good things,*  
Matth. 12. 25. yea, good thoughts too, as  
well as words; whereas a more worldly  
minded Christian, when to pray, presents  
little else but what savours of the world, e-  
specially in his thoughts: as *Psalm 37 31.*  
its said of the spiritual person, *The Law of  
God is in his heart, none of his steps shall  
slide:* no not so oft or much slip, when  
to go on in this or any other path of God.  
God himself is more engaged to keep such  
a heart from wandring from any of his



Commandments which is devoted to him. Hence that plea of his, *Psalms 119. 10. With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandments.*

5. Holy Zeal.

5. Holy Zeal. When there is an holy ardency of indignation against the least evil and impenitency arising in prayer, it's a means to redress the same. When Christians do not barely fall out with any such evil, but abhor it, hate evil as hell, (as the Greek word in *Rom. 12. 9.* signifieth) then will they more immoveably cleave to this or any other good, for they are joyned there; *Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good*, or be glued to that which is good, so as not to be stirred from it. A zealous Suppliant espying any such impenitency in prayer, presently falleth fowled it, cryeth out upon it, pursueth it with exclamations, censureth it in all its aggravations, and so gaineth more intentness of spirit, and seriousness of lively affections in the duty then before. Zeal is bold and couragious, and will not basely yield to any such intruder, but thrust them out of doors, looking at them as attended with a whole crowd of other like disturbers, ready to press in at their heels, if once permitted entrance into the soul of a Christian exercised in prayer. Look as the cutting or cropping off unprofitable sprouts, putting forth here or there, upon their first appearance

ance, cause the tree to grow the straiter, and to bring forth more seasonable fruit: So is it here, when by Zeal we cut off impertinencies at their first appearing, we bring forth more seasonably the fruits of every praying grace and disposition. And look as 2 *Kings* 6. 32, 33. when they were serious in that weighty discourse, there was charge given to handle that turbulent messenger roughly at the door, to prevent his Masters coming in at his heels: So is it here, when at this pious conference with God, any such unseasonable motions are zealously repulsed, it preventeth more sad disturbance in the duty. Albeit *Abrahams* zeal could not hinder the fowls from lighting upon his Sacrifice, yet will it not suffer them to rest there, but driveth them away, *Gen.* 15. 10, 11. Zeal also will make a godly Christian remove all causes and occasions of disturbance: As *Paul*, out of his zeal useth means to cast the devil out of the possessed maid, which occasioned that disturbance daily to them when they went to prayer, *Act.* 16. 16, 17, 18. As we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed &c. cried, &c. and *Paul* being grieved in spirit, said to the spirit, Come out of her.

6. Peace of conscience and calmness, 6. Peace of of spirit. If noise without disturb and conscience, distract us in prayer, much more clamorous noise within. The heart in hurries of con-

science unpacified in the blood of Christ in a pit of noise (as the Psalmists phrase it in the Hebrew, *Psalms* 40. 2.) hath not its goings established: *He brought me out of the horrible pit, and established my goings.* When God brought *David* out of the pit of noise, then, and not till then, were his goings established; then did his minde and heart take more fixed and strait steps in the ways of God. If the blood of Christ doth not speak such good things which further in us prayer, the blood of *Abel*, or the guilt of sin, will speak that which will startle us and stumble us whilst at prayer: and the poor soul will be more taken up with lillering to these cryes, and with perplexed thoughts, what answer to make to such pinching Objections thence, then be able to hold out its attentions to what he was to speak further unto the Lord. When *Asaph* was so beset with fears about his maintenance, (as *Psalms* 77. 1. to 10.) his prayers were rather reasonings to and against with inward cavils raised from his own infirmity of unbelief, then distinct requests. When the heart is shackled with such binding griefs and fears, it cannot go, much less run so sturdily in this, or any other way of God, but will be blundering and staggering in minde and heart: whereas peace and joy in God, they fit and free us for a steady and speedy motion in this or any other way of God.

God, *Psalms 119. 32. I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.*

7. Faith is a help against distractions in prayer. That preserveth from wavering in minde or heart in prayer. *James 1. 6, 8. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, &c.* especially if a Christian stir up himself to act and exercise his faith in such promises wherein the Lord undertaketh for his poor servants to help them against such distractions. *Jerem. 31. 9. With supplications will I lead them in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble.* *Isaiah 30. 21. Thou shalt hear a word behinde thee saying, This is the way, walk in it. when thou turnest to the right hand or to the left;* and so be speedily set to rights in minde or heart in Gods ways, when at any time starting aside. *Isaiah 40. 31. They shall mount up with wings as Eagles;* soar aloft with winged thoughts and affections in Gods holy ways. *Ezekiel 36. 27. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and to keep my Judgements and do them;* his Spirit shall keep his peoples mindes and hearts, intent and attent in his ways.

8. The fear and awe of God. Which as it helps to make through work in the things of God; whence that *Phil. 2. 12. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling:* So in this, it maketh us full of holy jealousy, lest

lest we should any way come short of what God requireth of us in it; or in stead of pleasing him therein, carry it so as to displease him. And as other fears call in, and confine all the thoughts to be exercised about the objects which are in their view, as matters of dread: so in this holy fear, lest we should sin against the Lord in our approaches to him, it fastneth the mind to attend to that end. This is a jealous Grace, and therefore will be suspecting every impertinent thought, and examine it, and awaken the soul to take notice of it, and to take speedy order with it. Hence is it, that by the fear of the Lord men come to depart from all manner of evil of sin.

9. Holy love

9. Lastly, Love of God, of Christ, and of the duty it self. Love it self is glue, and bond, and all, a very strong ing-ging, and indearing tye: it is an overcoming delightful affection, so that the mind will not so soon wander from its pleasing objects and actings. Love of God and good is so unsatisfied an affection, that the exercise of all the thoughts in their utmost intentness, at such praying times, seemeth unto love too slender, short and narrow for its employments. Hence that speech of Love, *Psalm 63. 7. Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice;* and yet *vers. 8.* as not having enough, saith, *My soul followeth hard (or cleavingly) after thee,* *Psalm 116. 1. David proceeth, I*  
love



love the Lord; and *vers.16. Truly Lord, I am thy servant, thy servant*; and *vers.17. I will call up the name of the Lord.* Love maketh him wholly for God, and that in a way of prayer also; so in love to the Duty of Prayer it self; if that *David* can say, (*Psal. 119. 30.*) *I have chosen the way of Truth*, he can also say, *vers.31. I have stuck to thy testimonies.* If the soul make choice of Prayer for for a lovely Ordinance, it will not be loose in it or from it, but cleave close to that holy exercise when called to it. As love of Christ will constrain *Paul* to attend to speaking of Christ, so as others may have soul-benefit, *2 Cor. 5.14. The love of Christ* (saith he) *constraineth me*; so will this work the like holy attention to the work of this holy speaking to God in the name of Christ. As it is with the burning-glass, by it the scattered beams of the Sun being more united, come to kindle upon combustible matter; so is it here, it cometh to pass, through this grace of love, that the scattered darlings, motions, and thoughts, like beams of the minde, are so gathered and kept in one, and so set and fixed upon the hearts desires expressed in prayer, that our hearts come to be even fired and inflamed spiritually: or as other heat, it doth *congregare homogenea*, and *disgregare Heterogenea*: So is it with this heat of holy love in prayer. It is an active instrument and means to compose and compact the good thoughts and stirrings

rings of the mind and heart, which are in-  
table to the expressions in prayer, but to scan-  
ter and remove impertinent and unsuitable  
motions and workings of our spirits there-  
in.

The success of  
prayers pe-  
stered with di-  
stractions.  
Distractions  
nullifying the  
force of pray-  
ers.

Touching the third thing propounded  
namely, the success of such prayers, which  
are pestered with distractions. I an-  
swer,

I. That some kinde of distractions in  
prayer, are such as do sorely underminae, if not  
wholly overturn the saving issue of any such  
prayers which they do accompany: and these  
are of four sorts.

I. When con-  
stant, com-  
manding, and  
general.

I. Such as are constant and commanding  
distempers, usually and in a manner constant-  
ly carrying all gainsaying motions before  
them, yet, such distractions as are uni-  
versally overspreading, as the duty of pray-  
er, so all other Duties. These argue ru-  
ling hypocrisie, and an Unregenerate estate.  
When the eyes of the minde of any per-  
son, which is to have to do with any of the  
ways of wisdom, are so constantly and pre-  
vailingly wandering in the corners of the earth,  
that person is a fool, a natural man, *Prov. 17.*  
*24. The eyes of the fool are in the corners*  
*of the earth;* namely, when he should have  
to do with wisdom, as the opposition shew-  
eth: *but wisdom is before him that hath*  
*understanding. Jerem. 12. 2. They are*  
*sheep for the slaughter of judgement,* whole  
trade and way that is, there mentioned, Thus

are not near in their mouth, but far from their  
 reins : When their mouth maketh the  
 godliest mentions of God in prayer, (or  
 the like) of Gods nearness to them, yet  
 even then he is far from their hearts and  
 thoughts.

2. Such distractions as are despised in the per-  
 sons eyes in whom they abound, he is careless  
 of them : This verifieth that *Prov. 19. 16 He*  
*that despiseth his ways shall dye*; be they the  
 ways of his minde, or heart, or lip, or life, if  
 he never regard whether they be regular or ir-  
 regular, he is a childe of death. When such  
 words get up, grow fast, yea, and overgrow  
 his better things, and he regardeth it not, sure-  
 ly, such a professors end will be miserable.  
*Prov. 24. 31. 33. The sluggards vineyard is*  
*covered over with nettles, and yet a little*  
*sleep. &c.*

2. When despi-  
 sed and con-  
 stantly negle-  
 cted.

3. Such as notwithstanding which, yet the  
 heart is quiet. *Prov. 24. 31, 33.* it breaketh  
 not his sleep. it molested not his ease, nor is  
 he so much as willing that such spiritual mis-  
 chiefs and evils should disquiet him; he is all  
 for ease and will not have that disturbed,  
*vers. 33. Yet a little sleep, &c.* such a ones ease  
 is sad. God regards not him nor any thing  
 he saith, but eyeth him as a loathsome sluggard  
 fit for ruine.

3. When lea-  
 ving the heart  
 quiet.

4. Such as overcome the soul, and by de-  
 grees eat out the very motions and disposi-  
 tions to prayer, or any other good work;  
*ibid.* compared with *Prov. 21. 25.* such a  
 slug-

4. When over-  
 running the  
 heart.

slugard had his desires, but even his desires too are overcome with such distempers. *The desire of the slugard killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour.*

Others not hindring answers of prayer.

1. If resisted.

2. There are some other distractions in prayer, which may stand with hopeful successes of the prayers annoyed by them. **As**

1. Such distractions in prayer which are strongly resisted, prayed against, and bewailed. Albeit sometimes by their violence they captivate us, so that as he said, *The good we would do we cannot, because of that present evil; Rom. 7. 21. And this part of the law of our members rebelleth against the law of our minds;* is quite cross to the bent of our spirits, as spiritual, *vers. 23.* whence with Paul, as *verse 24.* we are ready to cry out, *Wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from the body of this death?*

2. If frequently overcome.

2. Such as are frequently overcome, so that notwithstanding that opposition of the Spirit in us by the flesh, yet the flesh hath not its will of us *Gal. 5. 19. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh;* namely, so as to put it to the worst.

3. If amazing the heart.

3. Such which at the first arising of them do amaze and appal the heart; and so Satanical, and not ours.

4. If occasioned from bodily falls.

4. Such as are mainly occasioned from bodily distempers, melancholy, unwearied drowiness, sickness, pains, &c. in which case he pitieth us as a father his children, remembering

bring our frame that *we are but dust*, Psal. 102. 13, 14. as in *sick Hezekiah's chat-terings &c.* Is. 33. 8.

5. Such which are occasioned by some outward occurrents, as the disturbance occasioned at that prayer and fasting, 1 Sam. 7. 5, 6, 9, 10, 7 8. compared, so by sudden outcries, accidents, &c.

5. If occasioned by outward occurrents.

### CHAP. III.

*Touching good things suggested in prayer, and how discerned to be, or not to be delusions.*

**A** Third case of conscience about prayer, *Quest. 3.* Now to be considered of, is touching things materially good, which are suggested in prayer, how they should be discerned to be, or not to be delusions.

Before we lay down the marks of discerning these motions materially good, from those which are so formally; we must premise that such good things for the matter of the motions may be suggested and raised up in the spirit of a Christian, when praying to God, and yet not spring from the spirit of God. Even such like motions may be raised from our own natural spirits, as far as they are carnal, and likewise they may

Things materially good may be moved in prayer, and not from a good principle and cause.



may be cunningly propounded by Satan. And because this to some may seem strange, that good motions should be suggested to Gods people, or to others, whilst exercised in so good a work, and yet the same not to come from a good spirit, let us evince it a little from Scripture - examples and grounds.

They may arise from mans deceitful heart.

That such motions may come from our own hearts, as they are carnal, will appear by the character of mans heart in its self considered, and as far as natural, *Jerem. 17. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* Surely, if the heart could not play such a cheat as this, that speech would be too hyperbolical. When *David* sought God in and about his souls cases, he had experience of such seemingly friendly counsels to do this or that, to take this course for his succour, and thereby the Lords displeasure might be removed: but by his complaint of them, it appeareth he found them deceitful counsels; he is weary of such heart-counsels, saying, *Psalms 13. 1 2. How long shall I take counsel in my self?* When *David* was in so sad a case as he mentioneth, *Psalms 42. 1, 2, 3, 4.* one might think sad musings and thoughts being so sutable to his case, need not be suspected to be sinful; yet *David* perceived that those he had were tainted, and therefore chideth his soul for them, *verse 5. Why art thou so sad, O my soul?* when *Asaph*

was crying to God in prayer in that sad condition, *Psalm 77. 1, 2. &c.* he had motions in his mind then, propounding grounds of comfort whilst he sought God: for he saith, *I sought God, my soul refused to be comforted, verse 2.* Again, at the same time, he had other motions crossing the former, and perswading that it was not for such a wretch as he, who had lost Gods favour, to take hold of comfort: and these motions prevailed against the other; for he saith, *I sought the Lord, my soul refused, and my soul refused to be comforted:* both motions had their probable grounds of equity and truth, but could not be both from a good principle. He had also in his prayer many thoughts of Gods past mercies to him, yet other motions and inquisitions are made in and by his spirit, which make him but the more troubled and overwhelmed amidst his complaints, *verse 3. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.* True it is, that the thoughts of Gods mercies, together with the serious musings of our vilenesse and unworthy walkings, they work kindly, when they humble us, and break our hearts; but it is never of God that they should overwhelm us, as these did this good man. The like might be said of such motions demanding, *will the Lord cast off for ever? is his mercy clean gone for ever?* Albeit he doth cast off, and his mercy be gone, to sense at present, yet is it so for ever?

E e                      Was

was there any hurt in these? yea verily, *Asaphs* own conscience being Judge afterwards, *verse 10.* And I said, *This is mine infirmity.* *Psal. 39 3,4,5,6.* *David* hath motions in his heart which put him upon that, *Lord make me to know my end*, and it was materially a good thought which he expresseth, *man at his best estate is vanity*: yea, but *David's* heart was too hot within him, it was distempered heat against the prosperity of the wicked at which he was troubled; and these were but the sparklings of that wildfire: he doth as good as pray to hasten his own end; but he correcteth himself presently: *But now O Lord, what wait I for?* &c. he thinketh it more needful to exercise faith and patience, then to be so hasty and discontented *Job* uttered many things (out of the abundance of his troubled heart,) before the Lord, which were materially good. *Job 13.20,21,22. & 14.1,2,3,14,15.* compared with *chap. 15.12.* but his heart did but carry him away in sundry of them. A heart transported by a distemper, may make religious motions. & put upon religious expressions. The spirit of good *Moses* that man of God suggested things considerable, and put him upon uttering the same before the Lord in prayer. *Numb. 11.12,13,14.* *How I conceived this people? &c. whence should I have flesh to give them, &c?* *I am not able to bear this people alone*; yet verily, by that which the 15. verse mentioneth, it appeareth that his

his spirit was not regular and spiritual therein, but carnal; *If thou deal thus with me, kill me I pray thee.* The Spirit of the Disciples moved them to pray as is mentioned, *Luke 9. 52, 54. Lord wilt thou that wee command fire to come down from heaven upon them, as Elijah did?* The ground and warrant seemed weighty and rational, *verse 33.* The Samaritans did not receive him: yet they were deluded and mistaken, in listning to these motions of their own distempered spirits, as *verse 55. Jesus rebuked them, saying, Yee know not what spirit yee are of.* Whilst Jacob was praying so well, *Gen. 32. 28. As a Prince, saith the Angel, hast thou prevailed with God:* Yet an unreasonable and unsutable, and unwarrantable motion, materially good, ariseth in his heart, whence that further request uttered by his lips, *Tell mee, I pray thee, thy name, ver. 29.* A desire to know more of so glorious and gracious a one, as the Lord was, who would suspect that, or any thing which it moveth? yet verily curiosity blended and mingled it self therewith; hence so checked: *Wherefore askest thou after my name? verse 29.* Jeremy whilst he is praying humbly, *Jer. 15. 15. Remember and visit me, take me not away in thy long suffering;* yet behold a tincture of a distemper, though fair faced, ariseth therewith, and moveth him to speak thus, *verse 18. Wilt thou bee altogether to me as a lyar, and as waters that fast?* The disciples *Acts 1. 6.* seem

to themselves to have good ground for that desire and motion. *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?* but were transported with curiosity, and thence that secret check of Christ, *verse 7. It is not for you to know the times, &c.*

They may  
come from  
Satan.

And as mans heart can thus sophisticate, so Satan he can inject and suggest things materially good to our minds. Thus when Christ had been fasting ( and praying too) in the wilderness, he suggesteth a piece of Scripture to his mind, *Matth. 4. 1, 2, 4, 5. It is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee, &c.* Thus whilst Joshua is before God, Satan can present to him his sins, and charge his heart and thoughts with them, and that groundedly, for Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, *Zech. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.* & the Lord also addeth, *I have caused thine iniquity to passe from thee.* And what humble soul but would be ready to judge it meet to think of its sins? When to come before the Lord with that holy zeal of the Church of Corinth, against the incestuous Corinthians sin, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* Satan by his wiles would be transporting the same beyond bounds of compassion and charity, *2 Cor. 2. 6. Sufficient is such an ones punishment inflicted of many, ver. 7. So that contrariwise, yce ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest he be swallowed up with overmuch heavinesse.* And ver. 11. *Lest Satan should get an advantage, for we are not ignorant of his devices.* The poor penitent



penitent *Corinthians* sin was very great, and his sorrow needed to be exceeding great, and he was moved to sorrow exceedingly, and is there any evil in this? yes, a device of Satan to carry him out in his very sorrow for his sins, beyond all bounds. *The man Gabriel, an angel of light, brings a gracious message to Daniel in prayer, Dan. 9. 20, 21, 22, 23.* Satan can imitate the like message at the like time, for he can transforme himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14. as his Ministers can, like those of Jesus Christ, speak things materially good to the outward ear, which are formally Satanical, *ibid.* The like legerdemain can that old deceiver play, in reference to our inward senses, verifying that, *Proverbs 17. He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness, but a false witnesse deceit; namely, when in pretence he holdeth forth righteous things.* The Saints are most endangered by such a white devil, being more aware of him when he speaketh like himself. It was the devil in the poor possessed man, who had that motion in him, to do homage to Christ, *Mark 5. 5. When he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.* He also moved another such a like person to go to the Synagogue, as outwardly to observe the Sabbath exercises. *Mar. 1. 21. Christ entered into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, & taught; and ver. 23. There was there in the Synagogue a man of an unclean spirit.* The devil also could strongly

move such a one to make for substance a goodly confession: for the man cryed out, saying, *I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God.* But this was whilst the Auditors should have been hearkning to Christs doctrine, and joyning in his prayers sanctifying the action. Whilst the Apostle and his company were at prayer, Satan moved the possessed Damosel present to expressions in substance good, saying, *These men bring us to us the message of salvation, and are the servants of the most high God, Acts. 16. 16, 17.* when praying dispositions in those there present had been more suitable. So that it concerneth us the more to indeavour to a clear discerning of any such delusive motions, materially good, from such as are truly good and heavenly. A mistaken devil entertained for an angel of light, is most mischievous, and not easily excluded, when once admitted. Such comfort or counsel slyly suggested, will not so soon be rejected; but being admitted for good, is apt to be maintained. The good Witches (as they call them) which will tell men news of lost things, and how to right injuries done, are most mischievous, as bewitching and besotting the spirits of such as listen to their counsel: they are poysoners, *Revel. 21. 8,* Greek. Hence the devils instruments, Hereticks and Schismaticks, which propound Scripture grounds for what they hold forth, these beguile and hurt more souls then other

other wretches ; they bewitch people : *Galat. 3. 1. Who hath bewitched you ? These flatterers spread a net for mens feet , Prov. 29. 5. Seaven abominations are in the heart of Satan and his subtil Instruments, when they make their voice gracious ; as the Hebrew hath it, Prov. 26. 15. If Satan could nor, or did not set a good face upon his Treacheries to mens souls, and cover all with the mantle of good & pious motions, he would not so properly be said to deceive the whole world, Rev. 12. 9.*

But to come to the Marks of distinction and of discerning of this highest straine of the sophistication of our spiritual enemies, through suggestions materially good.

Marks of such like motions when delusive.

1. Such motions, materially good, which steal away the heart from the duty of prayer in hand, though possibly the Duty be carryed on but in an overly manner, by reason of those motions ; such are Satanical : on the contrary, motions which tend to farther intentnesse, and attentnesse thereon, they are of God. The Spirit of God is a faithful and wise guide, and useth not to lead the Saints about, or in by-ways, but in strait paths, right on by all his motions. The Spirit of God leadeth the sons of God in a direct way of crying, *Abba, Father. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. And yee have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby wee*

1. When they do but steal away the heart from prayer.

*cry, Abba Father, Rom. 8. 14, 15. Isaiah 30. 21. Thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, This is the way, walk in it, when thou turnest to the right hand or to the left.* The spirit moveth nothing to draw us out of the way of God, but to put us into it; and being in it, to move us to keep on. When a man in prayer hath his imagination working and exercised about good notions for godly discourse, for expatiating on some good subject, or meditation, or preaching; and that in such sort, as he cannot, and doth not minde scarcely what hee is saying or doing before God in prayer, these thoughts and motions are delusive.

2. When they are too violent.

2. Such motions as come into the heart with such violence, that they occasion inward hurries of spirit by them, and thereby breaking off the very duty sometimes, these though materially good, yet are delusive and satanical. As when in prayer strong motions are suggested, pretending to put us upon being affected with sorrow for some past evil, or fear about some evil imminent, yet so, as the same are pressed and followed with such violence, that they bend and tend to amazement and swallowing up of spirits; these are delusive. Such were those motions in *Asaph's* heart, whilst seeking God, which so troubled him, that he was overwhelmed, *Pf. 77. 2. In the day of my trouble I sought God; and verse 3. I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed*

verwhelmed. Such were the motions to the humbled *Corinthian*, when so violent, that he was like to be swallowed of overmuch heaviness about his sinful and sad estate, *2 Cor. 2. 7.* Satans devices were in it for his own advantage, *vers. 11.* *Lest Satan get advantage, for we are not ignorant of his devices.* The Lord never useth to maintain contention to cause the spirits of his people to fail, *Isaiah 57. 16.* *I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before me:* nay, rather the Spirit of God useth, when such troublous motions grow strong and very heavy, to put under his hand to revive the Saints spirits when ready to give out through such hurries of sad pressures of heart. *Isai. 57. 15, 16.* *To revive the spirit of the humble, for I will not contend for ever, lest the spirit should fail before me.* Hence that *Psalms 94. 18, 19.* *In the multitude (טַרְעָפִי,) of my wretched thoughts, thy comforts delight my soul.* The Spirit of the Lord will indeed suggest motions of fear, but not such as tend to make us break off through their violence, but sweetly rather to draw us to hold on in the way of God. *Jer. 32. 40.* *I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me;* he gently leadeth his flock as a shepherd, *Isaiah 40. 11.* Yea if the motions were to confidence in God, or joy in God, but with such violence, as to drive men into strange extasies, they are to be suspected. So in motions putting upon just anger for the ground



ground of it ; but with so much violence as not to be kept within bounds of godly moderation, and temperature of compassion : so in motions putting upon desires of something in its time, way, and proportion very desirable ; but so all upon the spur , and with so much imperiousness upon the spirit , as though all present service of God, and all other thoughts, must forthwith give room and place to this motion : which is enough to prove the same to be delusive ; the Spirit of God using to work regularly and calmly , even when he worketh most strongly. Sure it is, that it is not one and the same Spirit , that speaketh to a mans spirit, which whilst it was but then called upon to speak to the Lord about such a businesse of weight, it is now in such haste & hurry called off to run a long trade of mental discourse, so hotly and so closely with some other matter : but Cheater-like rather , coming galloping to overtake the honest Traveller, and falling in with him, he must all on a sudden, be over-intreated to step aside to take his kindnesse , and then he shall be told he shall on again , and dispatch his businesse in time good enough ; when it proveth rather to the poor Travellers losse in the close, on every hand.

3. When they are but empty notions.

3. Such motions, which are empty notions, carrying a shew of Scripture language, but are not Scripture ; haply some piece of Scripture joyned with something else, whereof

whereof the main is left out: So the Devil at the first sight seemed to suggest that Scripture, *Psalm 91.11,12. He shall give his Angels charge over thee,&c. Matth.4.6.* but look it over again, and you shall see the main limitation of Promise, *To keep thee in all thy wayes*, is left out; as something is added of the Devils own, in bringing this to back the temptation of Christ, *Cast thy self down, for it is written, He shall give his Angels charge over thee,&c.* Thus here is chaff mingled with Gods Wheat. Yea here is a pretence of a Scripture, when in the terms of it there was no such Scripture. Scripture in the Devil, or his Instruments mouth, is as the *Parable in the fools mouth*, *Prov.26.7.* Like to the legs of the lame, which are not equal, but halting. It is pretended, *Thus saith the Lord*, by the false Prophets, *Jer.23.17.* They say, *The Lord hath said,&c.* but *verse 28.* God counts it all but chaff, a meer empty husk, *What is the chaff to the wheat?* The like may be said of *Ierem.28.13.* and *1 Kings 22.11.* they did but pretend the word and counsel of God, *Thus saith the Lord*; it was not really so. *2 Thess.2.11.* God sends (in a judicial way,) *strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.* It were not a delusion, if better things were not held forth; yea, but indeed and in truth it's nothing else but a very lie, though backed possibly with the Scripture of truth wrested and abused. The devils Imps, to seduce

seduce the better, pretend the liberty of Jesus Christ, but indeed and in truth, *servitude to the flesh*, 2 Pet 2.18,19. So Satan himself would be beguiling of Christians with his delusive shadowes of Gods grace, counsels, comforts; but they who *hearken to such lying vanities, forsake their own mercy*, Jonah 2.8. But such things which the Holy Ghost suggesteth, they are realities, regularities, solidities. The Spirits suggestions carry a real port of divine Majestie and Sovereignty, and many times in the very mentioning of them doth he effect what he represented to the minde: *Psalm 4.8. The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, (and not barely hint it;)* yet so effectually, that a Song of praise for it followeth, *And my Song shall be with me* &c.

4. When any way crosse to Scripture.

4. Such motions in shew possibly Scripture, yet really suggested to crosse other Scripture counsels, reproofs, comforts, commands or threats; or coming crosse to principles of Faith, or light, or peace, and experience received from God; such motions are delusive and Satanical. Such were those suggested to Christ, whilst spiritually exercised in the wilderness, *Matth. 4.6. crossing that Scripture verse 7. Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* It's a deluding spirit, it setteth the blessed harmonious Scripture against it self. When Scriptures are set on the devils rack, by him-

Self immediately, or by his Instruments medi-  
ately, it's still devillish, 2. Pet. 3. 16. 17.  
They put them on the Rack, as they  
do other Scriptures, albeit to the perdition  
of such hucksters. Thus the Devil by the  
false Prophet pretends divine Authority  
and Warrant, for that which was directly  
contrary to Divine Authority, Jerem. 28.  
11, 14. *Hananiah* saith, *Babels yoke shall*  
*be broken in two years*, and that the Lord  
saith it; but God by *Jeremiah* saith, *No* :  
and as *Satan* doth thus mediately by his In-  
struments, so he useth to do more imme-  
diately by himself : But as for the Spirit  
of God, he being a spirit of Truth, can  
suggest nothing but what is consonant unto  
truth; *What he heareth* (saith Christ) *that*  
*he shall speak*, Joh. 16 13. And being a Spi-  
rit of Wisdom, he cannot speak contradi-  
ctions to what himself indited and inspired,  
as he did the Scriptures, 2 Pet. 1. 21. *he is a*  
*witness*, 1 Joh. 5. *A faithful witness speak-*  
*ing the truth*, the whole Truth, and no-  
thing but the Truth, and the same constant-  
ly: As it is said of the true witness, Prov,  
21. 28. *He that heareth speaketh constantly*.  
I deny not but that in some extraordinary  
cases God may say to *Abraham*, *That in*  
*Isaac shall thy seed be called*, &c. Gen. 21.  
and yet chap. 22. bids *Abraham* *kill that his*  
*Isaac*, before *Isaac* had any child, and so  
seemingly crossing his Promise, yea and his  
Precept too, *Thou shalt not kill*: but this  
was

was for trial sake. *Heb. 11. 17.* By faith Abraham when he was tryed, offered up Isaac. Nor do such extraordinary cases cross the tenure of ordinary rules, which we are to attend, and by which we are to judge of the regularity or irregularity of suggestions and actions.

5. When leaving no holy impression upon the soul.

5. Such motions which leave no impression upon the minde, but are forthwith forgotten, they are delusive. Satan is sometimes compared to *lightning*, Luke 10. 18. what lightsome motions he maketh, they are but flashes soon gone; the Spirits motions are abiding reflexions of Sun-like beames. Satan as a fowle will be present in Religious exercises, *Matth. 13. 4, 19.* compared, (the fowles attending the Sower, and interpreted the wicked one attending the Ministers in their preaching, and hearers in their hearing the Word.) But whatsoever flatterings he maketh in mens mindes, they are but vagrant and transient movings; but it's otherwise with suggestions truly divine. When such a motion and word is spoken from heaven to Christ *Thou art my Son, &c. Luke 3. 21, 22.* and the Spirit abideth upon him too, that argueth that it was indeed a divine attestation, *John 1. 32.* When in keeping the Commandments of Christ from love to him (as that command of Christ for prayer, *John 16. 23, 24.* or the like) the Lord so sheweth himself and his gracious counsels to us, that he abideth



abideth with us, the suggestions of such comfortable things to our hearts in prayer, are of God indeed. *Joh. 14. 21, 23. I will manifest my self to him, wee will come and make our abode with him.* When a word is so spoken once to us inwardly or outwardly, that it is heard twice by us, verily God spake that word to us indeed. *Psal. 62. 11. God hath spoken once, twice have I heard it, that power belongeth to God.* When Solomon is praying in his dream, and the while precious and sweet motions are suggested to him to ask what God shall give him; & when he asks wisdom, its said to him that hee hath that granted, and more, *1 Kings 3. 5, 9, 10, 11, 12. with ver. 15.* & this doth not vanish as a dream, but leaveth such an impression upon him, that when he awoke, the light, heat, and life thereof abideth; so that he must to *Jerusalem*, and offer sacrifice there, in regard thereof; this was indeed of God. So in that *Item* of God to *Paul* whilst he was praying, *1 Cor. 12. 8, 9. He said to me, My grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weaknesse:* this so stuck with *Paul*, and so warmed him, that he breaketh out thus; *Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, &c.* he rightly therefore concluded, that the Lord sayd thus unto him. Whilst *Jacob* is wrestling with the Lord, that is told him, that he should prevail with men, *Gen. 32. 28.* and the motion clave to him; and in confidence of the truth of it, he now dareth

dareth to meet his brother *Eſau*, *verse 32.* whom before he was so afraid.

6. When leaving the heart barren.

6. Such motions which leave the heart barren, when yet they swim aloft in the brain plentifully, are delusive; as those lying *Items* suggested to the ear from Satans instruments, they please, but profit not. *Jer. 23. 32.* *Therefore they shall not profit this people at all;* So these of Satan leave the heart fruitlesse. Satans sweet bits, then nourish no more the soul, then those of that dissembling Churle do the bodies of his guests. *Prov. 27. 8.* Like his sorcery of bringing a fair woman to anothers bed, which in the morning proved a carcasse. Satans flattering motions, whenever suggested, are but as other flatteries, a pleasing song, and chearing blaze, but ending soon after in sadness and smok. *Eccles. 5, 6.* *The song of fooles is like the crackling thorns under a pot.* Like those that in seeking God, *Hosea 5. last,* (*in their affliction they will seek me early*) they had such motions of returning to God, *Hosea 6. 1.* *Come let us return to God;* and of following on to know him, *verse 3.* *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord;* but *verse 4.* *their goodnesse was like the early dew and clouds vanishing away.* So *Psalm 78. 34.* *in seeking God when he slew them, they had motions materially good, stirring as verse 34.* For they considered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. But their hearts

*not right with God, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.* It was then without force upon their hearts, which indeed were never sincere and serious, but deceitful. But when the Spirit moveth upon the face of our souls in any ordinance, whether it be in and by motions of conviction, or consolation, it maketh the spices flow out, it causeth the various graces of God in the soul to give their fragrant sinell, *Cant. 4. 16. Awake O North wind, and blow O South upon my garden that the spices may flow out.* When Christ cometh to us in prayer, or in any other of his holy ordinances by the motions of his spirit, he cometh *as showres that water the earth*, Psalm 72. 6. the force thereof mollifieth our souls, and makes them fruitful, *Isa. 44. 3 4.*

7. Such motions which are various, confused and independent one upon the other, or upon the present business which then we are in hand with in our prayers. Such, albeit they may be for the matter of them good, yet being not distinct, methodical, or seasonable, they are not from Gods spirit, but from some other delusive spirit. Such *Items* are not words upon the wheels, in due order, according to our particular suits, &c. which are then in motion and agitation. Christs lips when he speaketh to us more immediately by his spirit, or otherwise, *they are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrhe.* *Can 5. 13.* His words and motions come not in

F f

heaps

heaps but orderly, drop after drop, and pertinently; as of the same myrrh-like nature all of them, as he guideth his truly wise servants, so that their tongue useth knowledge aright, *Prov. 15. 2.* so the fruit of his lips by his spirit floweth forth aply, dependingly in a right order, season and manner: but those of a delusive spirit, they are like sea-waves, tumultuous, independing, in no certain course or channel.

8. When puffing up the heart.

8. Such motions materially good, which put us upon high thoughts of our selves, and of our good estates, which heave up our spirits, they are delusive; like those in *Zedekiah*, who was confident that the Lord moved him to speak, *1 Kin. 22. 11.* *Thus saith the Lord saith he, and that his spirit had been with him, verse 21.* yet see how proud he was, and how he despised *Micaiah*, who indeed was moved by Gods spirit to speak; *he smote him on the cheek saying Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee.* The spirits motions in prayer tend to humility rather. As in *Abrahams* praying, and saying, *which am but dust*, *Gen. 18. 26, 27.* Those lilly-like drops from Christs lips, of which we spake from *Cant. 4. 13.* *they are myrrh*; of a holy funeral, abasing, and mourning use, as myrrh used about dead bodies to keep them from putrefaction.

9. When putting upon breach of relations.

9. Such motions materially good, suggested in prayer, which put us upon any breach of special relations, or duties of our calling.

are delusive. As when *Jonah* thinketh how merciful a one God is, and thence is put upon it to turn aside from his calling to pray at *Niniveh*, *Jonah* 4. 2. *O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.* Or if a private man should be followed in prayer with Scriptures, urging him (as he thinketh) to cast off civil subjection to higher powers, such as *1 Cor.* 7. 23. *Be not the servants of men;* Or *Mat.* 17. 16. *Then are the children free;* or if some private man should be moved in prayer very strongly, to kill such or such a wicked Ruler. from *Ehuds* example, *Judg.* 3. 15. Such like motions would be found to be delusive. The Apostle to prevent such abuses, saith, *1 Pet.* 2. 16 17. *As free, but not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness.*

10. Such things materially good as are moved in prayer, either to justify some former evil thing in us, as *Jonah* in his prayer now mentioned, *Jonah* 4. 2. he reviveth in his minde those former thoughts of Gods gracious nature, as a plea whereby to have justified him in that refusal to obey his call to *Niniveh*: *O Lord, was not this my saying?* &c. Or when they are moved to ground some present distemper'd request in prayer, as that pretended humble motion of *Jobs* in prayer, *Job* 7. 11, 17, 18. *What is man, that*

13. When tending to justify any unwarrantable practice:



*thou visitest him?* brought in (as it may seem) to back his distempered desire not to live any longer in such misery, expressed, *verse 15, 16. I loath to live my days are vanity: and verse 17 what is man? &c.* So *1 Kin. 19. 4.* distempered *Elias* saith, *He is no better then his fathers;* good, yea, but its brought in to plead that God would dispatch his life; *O Lord take away my life, for I am no better then my fathers;* and this was delusive.

II. When tending to harden a person in some unsafe way.

Lastly, when God in judgement ordereth it to some false and perverse seekers of him, that some things which they conclude to be good shall be suggested to them, whilst seeking of him; but in judgement for some inordinacy, or hypocrisie in their requests and so in wrath not in mercy. God had once told *Balaam* inquiring of him, that he should not go with *Balacks* messengers, *Num. 22. 12. Thou shalt not go with them:* and yet out of his covetous mind, and desire of the wages of unrighteousness, he will go again to move him for his counsel about going *verse 19. Tarry ye here* (saith he to *Balaks* second messengers) *this night, that I may know what the Lord will say more to me:* and *verse 20. God came to Balaam at night, and said to him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them.* *Balaam* was inordinately set to go, & God when he again inquireth about going, doth in judgement bid him go. For *verse 32. the angel telleth him, Behold I went to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me.* *Ezek.*

14.47. *Every one that putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the Prophet to inquire of him concerning me, I the Lord will answer him that cometh by my self, according to the multitude of his idols.* And as God deal-eth judicially with such rotten hearted ones. inquiring after his counsel in the word, he in like sort dealeth with like persons inquiring after his counsel in prayer.

## CHAP. IV.

*Touching use of means with prayer.*

WE are now to proceed to some other cases of conscience about prayer.

A fourth case is, *How far forth means are to be used together with our prayers?*

*Quest.*

In Answer whereunto, let us shew,

*Ans.*

1. That means are to be used with prayer.

And 2. how they are to be used. Touching the former,

That means are to be used with our prayers; It is clear in all instances of the Suppliants of God in their prayers, and in Christs example also, using the means with his prayers. *Nehemiah*, as he prayed that he might be improved as an instrument of good to his distressed countrey-men; so also did he use his interest in his Lord and Master

Means to be used with prayer.

the King, to further him therein, *Nehemias*, and 2. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. shew: and when he was in hazzard by reason of his enemies powers and policies, as he prayeth with the people, so he setteth a watch, *Neh. 4. 9. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them night and day, because of them. Ezra and the rest had confessed the sins of the people, but must use the means to re- form the same, Ezra 10. 1. Now when Ezra had prayed, &c. Shechaniah answered, Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away the strange wives: and from verse 3. Arise, for this matter belongeth to thee, &c. Abrahams servant with his prayer for success in the business of procuring a wife for Isaac, Gen. 24. 12, 13, 14. he useth the means to speed therein, he bestoweth bracelets upon her, when he began to perceive her to be the woman, verse 21, 22, 23. &c. Paul with his prayers that the *Philippians* love may be bound, Phil. 1. 9, 10. will use exhortations for that end, Phil. 2. 1. Christ when to raise *Lazarus*, as he will pray, so commanded that the stone be removed from the grave, John 11. 38, 41. And with his prayers for the failing of *Peters* faith, &c. Luk. 22. 31, 32. he useth that means of recovering words also.*

Reasons; be-  
cause,  
1. God ordi-  
narily effect-  
eth our desires  
by means.

Let us adde three or four Reasons hereof why means must be used with prayer.

1. Because ordinarily God giveth us the blessings which we seek of him in the use of means. If *David* pray for a victory

ver to Philistines, God will give it him, but he must listen to the noise in the tops of the Mulberry-trees, to know when he must fall on, as he must first fetch a compass, the better to lie in ambush. 2 *Sam.* 5. 23. 24. 25. So he shall recover all, upon his prayer and inquiry, that the *Amalekites* took from *Ziklag*. 1 *Sam.* 8. But he will use means to come upon them where they are securely, by making use of the information of that *Egyptian* souldier of theirs whom they left behind *verse* 11, 15. *Jacob* shall prevail over *Esau*, having prevailed over God, *Gen.* 32. 32. But will use the means by a large gift to pacifie his brothers wrath. *Paul* hath a promise of the lives of all in the ship, *Acts* 27. 24. 25. Yet some means, as that of that boat must not be used, *verse* 31. 34. and other means more unlikely must be used for the safety of all, *verse* 44. they that can swim must do it, and the rest get upon boards, and pieces of the wrack to the shore. *Not a bone of Christ shall be broken*, yet God ordained it that he should be dead, before they came to hasten his death by breaking his bones, as they did the others, *Joh.* 19. 33. 35. compared. *Of those that the Father gave me, have I lost none*; according as it is written, *Joh.* 18. 9. Yet will he use the means, that his weakly disciples may at that present escape that temptation of suffering, *verse* 8. God delighteth to bless the use of means as his own ordinance he will be seen to be all in means, and over

means, and will have his people discern the sweet accord betwixt the first and the second causes.

2 Use of means  
maketh mer-  
cies more va-  
lued.

2. Because the more costly and difficult mercies are to us, the more they are prized by us, and they stay and stick the longer with us. *Hezekiah* hath means prescribed for his recovery, which God could have wrought without them; but his recovery is thereby the more memorable. *Abrahams* servant with prayer using sundry means, had made many more affecting observations of speaking providences for accomplishing his business, and did the more thankfully admire God therein, and repeat the same the more feelingly for others benefit. See *Gen.* 24. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 50, 52. There are more conspicuous varieties of Gods Wisdom, Grace, Power, and Truth, in such a way. Both the means and the mercies which we obtain in and by prayer, with use of means, are more suitable to our humane condition here; when means are used by us, we are often minded of the mercies received thereby, by like cases and means occurring, and are fitter to mind others thereof occasionally.

3. The Saints  
are the more  
quieted in the  
successes,

3. Because the Saints using means with their prayers, are quietest and most at peace in the issues thereof, whatsoever they prove, and are strongly armed against objections impugning their fidelity to God, themselves, or others; being thereby also fenced against temptations to discontent, &c. *Hannah* having pray-  
ed



ed by her self, and having set good *Eli* also on work with God for her, she is quiet, 1 Sam. 1. 13, 16, 17, 18. *David* after he had with his prayers to defeat *Achishophels* counsel (2 Sam. 15. 32. Lord turn *Achishophels* counsel into foolishness) used means to escape *Abshaloms* bloody Army, martialling his own Army for that end. 2 Sam. 18. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. how quiet he is, Psa. 3. title, compared with ver. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. sheweth, *A psalm of David when he fled from his son Abshalom*, verse 5. *I laid me down and slept &c.* he can then sleep as sweetly in his Tent, as in his Palace.

4. Because the Saints using means with their prayers, are sure either of the good things they seek, or as good, and the Lords blessing upon them. *Abrahams* servant *Nehemiah* & others had the very mercies they sought. *Paul* and *Moses* had the good of that which they sought, 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10. Deut. 34. God gave not *Paul* the desired deliverance from the evil he complained of, but yet giveth him grace sufficient to guard and support him against his temptations. *Moses* shall have all in a view at a distance, which they had who went into *Canaan*, Deut. 3. 23, 28. *David* earnestly desired to have built God a Temple; *It was in his heart so to do, and accordingly he made ready*, 1 Chro. 28. 2. yet v. 3. he not must build it; but 1 Kin. 8. 17, 18. God honored him in selecting his son *Solomon* to do it; verse 19. and he farther honored *David* with a glorious testimony of his gracious acceptance of such desires

4. The Saints then come to have the things themselves, or as good.

fires and endeavors of his to have done it, even as if he had actually done it, *verse 18*. yea he honoured him with that divine discovery of all the platform of that goodly fabrick; that albeit *Solomon* shall erect it, yet *David* shall have the honour above him in all matters concerning the framing of it, *1 Chr. 28. 19*. *Abraham* denied his desire in *Ishmael*, *Gen. 17. 18*. but its fully made up in the blessing upon *Isaac*, and *Ishmael* some way also fared the better for it, *verse 6*.

Rules about  
the use of  
means.

I. Sanctifie e-  
ven them by  
prayer.

As touching the other particular, namely, What Rules are to be attended unto, in our using of the means with our prayers. I answer:

I. Sanctifie even the very means which you use, with prayer for a Blessing upon them. So did *Nehemiab*, his petition to the king was sanctified by his petition to the King of heaven, *Neh. 2. 4 5*. So I prayed unto the God of heaven, and then I said unto the King. &c. and *Ezra 8. 21*. those godly *Jews* sought God by fasting and prayer, for a right way of proceeding in their return into *Judea*. *Asa* will see the battel in aray, as the means, but yet sanctifie it by prayer, and yet then also profess, it is all nothing without the Lord, *2 Chron. 14. 10, 11*. We have no power, help us O Lord our God. And indeed when Christians sanctifie the means by prayer, they acknowledge God as All in All, even in the means as well as the end; this will prevent using of unlawful means. If *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Rebecca*, and *Jacob* had done so, they

they had not used those poor shifts mentioned, *Gen. 12. & 20. & 26. & 27.* no better then lying. Besides, it will prevent a blast upon that which means may bring about without such prayer, to sanctifie the same: when we use means with success in our desires, without prayer, we either want the comfort of the thing attained, or it is unexpectedly snatched from us; or it is some way perverted to some unwarrantable use, or rather abuse thereof.

2. Be we choice, prudent, and pious in making use of the means we pitch upon, and as pious and prudent in the manner of using the same. Neither chuse nor use any unlawful means, as *Rachel* and *Sarah* did, to give their maids to their husbands, to attain their desire of children by them. Or as *David* in danger at *Gath*, supplicating for deliverance, but scrabbling too as the means. Nor are we to use any unfutable or unseasonable means, or lawful pertinent means unlawfully or unseasonably, but use lawfulest and likeliest means. As *Mordecai* with prayer used *Queen Esthers* interest with her husband King *Ahashuernus*; and *Jacob* with his prayer sends *Esau* a Present, a gift using to prosper whithersoever it goeth.

2. Use the best means.

3. Look we that there lye no fault or sin upon us, in such sort as might blast both our praying and means using also. As in *Joshua's* crying whilst *Achans* sin lay upon the Congregation, *Josh. 7. 10, 11, 12, 13.* Why cryest thou? — *Israel hath sinned, &c.* So the Israelites for avenging that horrid crime of *Benjamin*,

3. Remove what might blast the means.

*jamin*, Judg. 19. gather an Army, and pray too; but for sins among them, and too much trusting to their numbers, &c. twice blasted, **Judg. 20.** Hence when godly *Ezra* would use means for their safe return to *Judea*, he putteth his company upon solemn humiliation of themselves before God, *Ezra 8.* lest their sins might way-lay them.

4. Use means  
in faith.

4. Use the means in faith. Set faith on work, as well in the use of means as of prayer. *Nehemiah* prayeth, setteth a strict watch, encourageth all sorts to fight, but all in faith: *Our God shall fight for us* Neh. 4. 9, 13, 14. compared. *Moses cryeth*, Exo. 14. 15. so did the people, *Neh. 9. 9.* and withal *Moses* useth means prescribed of God for to pass thorow the red sea, *Exod. 14. 24. he stretcheth out his hand over the red sea to divide it*; but all this was in faith, looking through all their prayers, and all secondary means, unto the Lord as All in All: *By faith they passed through the red sea*, Heb. 11. 29. *Asa* setteth the battle in array, and prayeth, but resteth neither on his war-like power nor on his prayers, but on the Lord alone: *We rest on thee*, 2 Chro. 14. 10 11. And indeed we have need to use means in faith, looking through means, and resting on the God of them, and on his promise for succeeding the same. *Jacob* prayeth as well after he had pitched upon the means of pacifying *Esau* as before, and yet resteth on the charge of God that he should return, and his promise, *That he will be with him and do him good*, Gen. 32. 10. and

and on that, *verse 28. With men thou shalt prevail*, compared with *verse 30. Use the means also in faith*, respecting the warrantableness thereof, lest in that respect what is not of faith become sin to us. And let all be done in faith also, eying and owing God in all successes of prayers and means, as the chief, as all. So *Ex. 15. 1 & 2. He hath triumphed gloriously. the horse and rider hath be thrown into the sea.*

5. Be diligent and patient in using means, waiting upon God for the success, as they do that dig for Mines *Prov. 2. 3, 4. Our eyes wait in thee, as the eyes of the handmaid upon her Mistress &c. Psal. 123.*

6. In using means be we submissive. Bind not God to our praying, or means using, much less to this or that means, or manner, or season, either of the use, or of the success of the same; but leave all with the Lord, to do, delay, or deny as he pleaseth. Even *Isaiah* spake nobly herein to his brother, *2 Sam. 10. 12. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.* This he spake after he had used all warlike means for a good success, mentioned, *ver. 10, 11. David*, though he so earnestly desired, and industriously endeavored to build a Temple, and was denied the success as to himself, yet resteth quiet and satisfied in Gods mind touching his son, and his acceptance of him for other service, although not for that. So *Paul* denied of that he so earnestly begged and



and endeavoured, yet rests quiet in Gods answer, *My grace is sufficient for thee*; saying, *2 Cor. I 2.9, 10. Most gladly therefore will I rejoyce in my infirmities.*

7. If means prosper not, search out the cause.

7. When means have been thus used with prayer, and yet do not succeed, search out the Cause, be humbled for it, and redress it; find out the *Achan* that troubleth *Israel*. and execute holy vengeance upon him, *Josh. 7.* and be not discouraged then to go on using means, as *Joshua* useth stratagems to take *As* and the men thereof, who had the better but then of *Israel* *Josh. 7. & 8.* compared. So did *Israel* after their twofold defeat by *Benjamin*, humble themselves greatly before God, enquire his counsel, and use stratagems against *Benjamin*, and prospered, *Judg. 10* So *Paul* hindered off from going to the *Romans* to do good among them; albeit he prayed and endeavoured it, yet was ready to it still, *Rom. I. 10 11, 13, 15.*

## CHAP. V.

*About time spent in Prayer.*

**H**AVING briefly dispatched this Case, about the use of means with prayer, we shall go on to speak to a fifth Case, namely, concerning the time to be spent in prayer, *How long, or how short we may be in prayer?*

*Quest. 5.*

About time in prayer.

Much time to be spent in prayer.

To which I answer, more generally, That the space of time is not fixed, or limited; but the Text plainly sheweth, that much time

is to be spent in prayer : *Pray without ceasing*,  
 implieth, Be much in prayer ; spend much time  
 about it. For 1. The heart is not so suddenly  
 or easily gotten upon the wing ; yet in that  
 doth the nature and life of prayer consist. It  
 is a lifting up the heart, *I lift up my heart to*  
*thee* ; that is, I pray, *Psal. 25. 1*. We pray in-  
 deed, when our hearts are elevated in prayer.  
 Many weights are oft-times upon our spirits to  
 press them down, which are not so easily remo-  
 ved ; many bonds, yea knots in these cords,  
 straitning our spirit, which are not easily un-  
 loosed : we need enlargement of our hearts to  
 run any such way of Gods Commandments.  
 We would, as men sometimes in their sleep,  
 faint cry, but there is such a weight upon our  
 breasts, that we cannot ; deadness seizeth upon us,  
 and much rubbing is needful ere life is recover-  
 ed : dulness annoyeth us, and much whetting  
 is requisite, ere our hearts get a spiritual edge  
 upon them : we may say with the Church,  
*Quicken us, so will we call upon thee*, *Psalms*  
*81. 18.* and as *Eccl. 10. 7*. If the iron be blunt,  
 the more pains is taken to sharpen it, so it is  
 here with our blunt spirits in prayer.

1. The heart is  
 not soon ele-  
 vated.

2. The necessities of the souls of the best, are  
 so many and weighty, that a little time will not  
 suffice to express them ; yea, it being the trade  
 of a gracious soul to be thus merchandizing,  
 his work and business being to be thus plead-  
 ing, his calling as a Saint being to call upon  
 God ; surely a little time should not be taken  
 up in this his proper employment.

2. The souls  
 weighty neces-  
 sities call to it.

3. His

3. As time is husbanded in prayer, other times are better spent.

3. As the time in prayer is managed and improved, all the rest of our time is either blessed or blasted to us. That morning that the soul speeds well, that day all goeth the better; and on the contrary: if *Jacob* see Gods face in prayer the night before, he is confident to speed well the next morrow, *Gen. 32. 30.* If the Instrument of a Christians spirit be not well tuned in prayer, truly he will make but bad music of it all the day after in his calling and employments. If we speed not well at heavens Court, we shall not do so well in earths Country. If at this holy Mart and Port we get not well stored, and full lading, we shall make but poor Markets elsewhere.

We are to be long in prayer in case

But to answer more particularly. Sometimes in special sort we are to be long in prayer; other times there are, when it meet to be but short. We are to be long in prayer

1. Of more then ordinary occasions.

1. When some extraordinary occasion of the Church or Commonwealth, or of our own or other Christians call for it. Prayer of eight hours long was made on that Fast day, *Neh. 9. 3.* *Nehemiah* himself spends whole days in prayer and fasting, *Neh. 1. 4.* Prayers stretched out upon the Tilters (as the Gr. word is *Act. 1. 2. 5.*) was made by the Church for *Peters* enlargement. Upon the calling of Christs twelve Disciples, he spent a whole night in prayer, *Luk. 5. 1 2, 1 3.* and so in Families Christians for a time are to be as onely sequestred to prayer and fasting, sometimes, *1 Cor. 7. 5.* *Abstain with consent for a time, that you may give your selves to prayer, Ezr. 8. 21.* 2 When

2. When strong and long temptations <sup>2. Of special temptations</sup> are upon us, *Luke 22. 44.* Jesus Christ in that strong and bloody conflict in his soul, being in an Agony, he prayed, *ἐν τῷ ἐξέτασθαι*, in a more extended mannner: Then the Psalmist cryeth himself hoarse with long crying, when in these quagmires, that deep pit, those deep waters, *Psal. 69. 1, 2, 3.* *I sink in the mire, I am weary with crying, my throat is dry.* Lord in trouble they have poured out a prayer to thee, *Esa. 26. 16.* *They do not onely barely drop, but plentifully pour out prayers.* Then *Psal. 102.* Title: *A prayer of the afflicted, when in distresse he poureth out his complaint, &c.* and that prayer following is longer then others. When Satan, ὁ Ἀντίστος the Law-Adversary doth extend his Pleas against us, it's meet that we should enlarge our Counter Pleas for our own souls; as the powers of darkness do lengthen and multiply their wrestlings, so mult we our counter wrestlings of Prayer. *Eph. 6. 12, 18.* *We wrestle with principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darknesse of this world.* Praying with all manner of prayers. &c.

3. When some sad trials and sufferings <sup>3. Of Eminent trials.</sup> are Eminent and approaching, then will Jesus Christ spend night after night in prayer, not long before his bitter sufferings. Compare *Luke 21. 37.* with chap. *22. 23.* *For my love they are my Adversaries,* (saith he, *Psal. 109. 4.*) but I pray, or I

give my self to prayer, whilst they are treacherously plotting my ruine. We must lay in a stock, a store, a magazine of prayers, against such a spiritual seige, and sorest sufferings; wherein, if not then so fit to pray, we may have the benefit of former prayers.

4. Of spiritual Frames.

4. When wee are in any special spiritual Frames, then spread out your sails and hoise them up to receive and improve the wind, as long as any spiritual gales last. When liberty of speech is granted and given us, then speak on. When the Cloud filleth the Temple, now is a time, it ever, for *Solomon* to make his long prayer there, *1 Kings 8. 10, 11, 12, 22.* *when we are filled with the spirit, we may well continue pouring out prayer.*

5. Of death not far off.

5. When we are not like to live long: *Christ* knowing he had but few dayes to live, spent the more time in prayer. *Luke 21, and 22.* compared with *1 Pet. 4. 7.* *now the end of all things is at hand (at least some in particular) therefore be sober, and watch unto prayer.* If Heavens pleaders have but a little while allotted them, they had not need lose any of that little time to plead in. When such spiritual Merchants are shortly to go out of this country of trading so by prayer, they had need bestow themselves to purpose. When these travailours are so shortly to take their long journey home, they had need improve



improve every sand of Times hour-glass, for the dispatch of the remaining part of their prayer-businesse here. Sicknesse alloweth but little respite and free space for prayer. Other work of the poor soul is so various then, and perplexing, that it taketh up the whole man to dispatch that. And indeed when sincere ones have not long to live, they are the fitter for prayer. When the Saints are neer the Ocean of Eternity, then the Rivulers of Grace in their soules wax stronger. Weakly persons which are Godly, are so often minded of Eternity, and Perpetuity, as times successours, that they bear an Image of Perpetuity; it is deeply Instamped upon them in their Spiritu-als.

*Obj.* But some will say, Shall not Suppliants then wander and vanish into forbidden Repetitions, if they are long in prayer?

*Ans.* 1. The Saints are and may be helped with such holy variety, that unlawful Repetitions may be avoyded, as might be evinced by many Reasons, if need were.

2. We distinguish of Repetitions in prayer: some are lawful, some are unlawful: The Scripture frequently giveth us instances of lawful Repetitions, as *Amos* 7. 2, 5. It is twice repeated, *by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.* And in *Solomons*

prayer, *1 Kings* he oft repeareth this clause: *then hear thou in Heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive,* &c. *vers.* 30, 39 &c. of this sort of lawful Repetitions in prayer, are these.

First, which are wrought from extremities.

First, such which are wrung from the strength of pinching necessities, or temptations: as when Christ was so hard bestead in the Garden, he oft, even a third time spake the same words, Intreating his Father, *that if it were his will, that the Cup might passe,* *Matth.* 26. 39, 42, 44. and chap. 27. 46. *Eli, Eli, Lamasabachthani, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* So Paul in a like sort besought God thrice in the same manner, *2 Cor* 12. 7, 8. *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me:* like children in great pain, when they are to tell where it is, they iterate and reiterate this cry, *O here, here, here, O here:* or like men in a ditch, or among thieves iterating this outcry, *Help, help, help,* or as prisoners in straits, crying, *Bread, bread, for the Lords sake bread, a little bread for Christs sake;* or as it is with men, when their houses are on fire in the night, they cry, *Fire, fire, fire.*

Secondly, wherein the heart is lively.

Secondly, such Repetitions wherein the heart is carried out with equal strength, of feeling and holy affections, at a third, as at a first time; so was Christ in his Iterated cries. *He made supplication with strong crying and teares.* So *Dan.* 9. 17, 18, 19. often Iterateth, *O Lord hear:* when

when there is in a gracious supplicant so much strength of love, desire, and esteem, and suitable reachings after mercies begged, that the soul is not content to speak once, but it must speak it over and over againe. As friends when commending some businesse of greatest weight to their friends care, they will be often repeating, Be sure you forget me not in such or such a thing: So is it here in making known our requests to God. Or as it is with a cry uttered with greatest strength, It causeth the Iteration of a like Eccho: so is it here when repetitions in prayer, are the Ecchoes of strong cries of spirit; as it is when a Ball is banded with great strength, it maketh many rebounds: so is it when the heart is carried out with great strength of holy affections, it is apt to make these holy rebounds of such repetitions; or as a Bell which having been but then ringing, doubles and redoubles its knoes, from the strength put forth in its ringing; So will the gracious heart be giving many reiterated lifts, and those sounding out in like expressions of the lips in prayer. Hence that reiterated desire of the Saints, *Amen* and *Amen*.

Plal. 72. 19.

3. Such Repetitions in prayer are lawful, which spring from some strong workings of faith, in the expectation of mercies: such was that Iterated cry and prayer,

3. Which spring from faith exercised

er, *Amen*, even so (which is the sence of the same) *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly*, as believing Christs word then mentioned, *Loe I come quickly*, *Revel. 22. 20.* So *Psal. 89. 50, 51.* the Psalmist concluding that God had heard his prayer, saith, *Blessed be the Lord, Amen, and Amen*: such was that frequent repetition of *Dauids* in his prayer to God to blesse his house, as building upon the truth of his promise for that end: of which see *2 Sam. 7. 25, 26, 27, 29.* thus is faith letting down the same bucket into the well, which is presented to it: when the believing soul heareth assuredly that its friend, the Lord, is within hearing, it knocketh thus again and again, in the same sort as before.

4 Which spring  
from love.

4. Such repetitions in prayer which spring from love, or are accompanied with special delight and spiritual stirring of heart in the very mention thereof: such was their reiterated cry in solemn worship of God, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; Revel. 4. 8.* such straines of love and holy delight may often be reiterated in holy musical divisions (as I may call them) albeit there be little variation. Look as where a speech is pleasing, a motion is wont to be made to heare that over again; so here, the spirit of Christ liking to hear us speak so very savourly and sincerely in this or that passage in prayer, may bid us speak that again. In sundry passages of the

the Saints prayers, the holy Ghost in special manner spake in them and with them, and such like double speeches of Gods Saints and Spirit speaking together, may well be repeated.

But yet there are Repetitions in prayer which are unlawful, as,

Repetitions in prayer unlawful.

1. Such which are affected: as straines of eloquence, uttered in a Rhetorical way.

1. When affected.

Such were those of the Gentiles, *Matth. 6.*

7, 8. *Use not repetitions as the Heathens.*

These may please mens eares; but in prayer, whereas suppliants should be most humble and self-denying, they are loathsome to the Lord.

2. Such Repetitions which are vain,

2. When vain.

*Matth. 6. 7. Use not vain repetitions: vain, that is, empty, frothy, impertinent, unprofitable repetitions, wherein is no spiritual life, hear, vigour, nor yet solidity nor integrity.*

3. Such repetitions which are Idolized,

3. When Idolized.

*Matth. 6. they think they shall be heard for their much babling: to conceit that God would not, or could not take notice of our wants, unlesse we should word it in that sort with him, is a great dishonour to his free and rich grace, and to his faithful and watchful care and respect to his suppliants: or to rest and trust in our Repetitions, that God will the rather regard us, is to make God like a mortal man.*



4. When from  
hypocrisie.

4 Such Repetitions which spring from hypocrisie, namely from secret desire to seem to be fervent in prayer, or to be thought of others to spend much time in prayer, or to stop the mouth of an accusing conscience, which would else be quarrelling at persons if too brieft in prayer, and therefore to fill up times, men will be making such repetitions of the same things and phrases, in their prayers; such like repetitions as these are sinful and heathenish: men thereby take Gods name in vain, abuse his holy eare, willing to draw him to listen to babblings, they derogate from the glory of Gods wisdom, would make God to be one that is dull of hearing or conceiving, as childish as the sonnes of men; like an Idol *Baal*, 1 King. 18. needing long and loud crying to awaken him by a vain reiteration, O *Baal* heare us. Such cast disparagement and dishonour upon the renowned Ordinance of Prayer, making it to be but as empty expence of time in airy, vain, and vanishing expressions. So much for the answer to the former part respecting length of prayer: Now consider in what cases, and with what Cautions we may be short in prayer.

We may be  
short in pray-  
er in case of  
bodily Ayls.

We may be short in prayer, 1. in case of bodily sicknesse, pain, Faintnesse, and death approaching, *Dan.* 10. 16, 17. *How can thy servant talk with this my Lord, when*

there remaining no strength in me? Sick *Hezekiah* and *Jacob* were short in prayer, *Esay* 38. 1, 2. *Heb.* 11. 21. *Jacob* worshipeth God leaning on his staffe.

2. In case of pressing occasions, unavoyd- 2. Of pressing  
able by ordinary prudence or providence: occasions.  
when the Philistines came suddenly upon  
*Samuel* and upon *Saul* in prayer, they soon  
dispatch, 1 *Sam.* 7. 14.

3. In case of prevailing indisposedness 3 Of prevailing  
of heart to pray; after much strivings to indisposedness,  
pray, yet distempers and hurries of spirit a-  
bate not: better then be short, then mul-  
tiply words in any senselesse and tumultu-  
ous manner, and take Gods Name in  
vain.

4. In case a Christian be personally 4 Of personal  
persecuted, and may not stay long in one persecution.  
place.

5. In case the prayer to be made be one- 5 Of Occasio-  
ly occasional, above that of our ordinary nal prayer.  
course. In such a case *Hezekiah* is short,  
2 *Kings* 19. 14. to 20. & 2 *Chro.* 30. 20, 21.  
Onely in spending so little time in prayer,  
take we these Cautions.

1. That it be not ordinary and usual Cautions tou-  
with us so to doe, but rather occasional: ching short  
to be ordinarily so brief in prayer, would prayer.  
argue strangeness and unacquaintedness 1 That it be  
with the Lord, men not using to hold any not usual.  
long discourse with strangers. It would  
manifest suspicion and distrust, and sleight-  
ing of God; as men that use to speak  
either

either seldome, or but little at once, with persons they suspect, or dare not trust, or who are not regarded. Besides, it would evidence a self-full spirit; they have little businesse with the Lord, and therefore will not exchange many words before him: however, it will be an argument at best, of slender abilities and weakness of minde, that they cannot hold any long discourse with God.

2. That it be not so from a worldly spirit.

2. That it be not out of a worldly spirit, so earnest and intent upon the world, as affording scarce time for God or good; family and closet services of God, must therefore be dispatched usually in haste and a hurry: there are so many that call upon such persons without, that they have not leisure or list to be with God in prayer, within: they are so familiarly and fully imployed with these new friends, that they speak but by snatches with God. They are so much abroad, that they can be but little at home: when these choaking weeds of the world spread so fast, & so far, that they croud and thrust the good grain, herbs and fruits into a very narrow room and compasse.

3. It be not from sleightnesse.

3. That it be not from negligence or sleightnesse, yea, or from prophane-nesse of spirit, supposing that such a short good-morrow, or good-even will serve the Lords turn well enough.

4. That it be not from improvidence.

4. That it be not out of improvidence

dence, when by the use of godly foresight, wisdom, and prudence, such streights of time for prayer might have been prevented: for that will sadly afflict and abase a Christian, if he bee indeed gracious and tender-hearted.

## CHAP. VI.

*About pleading in Prayer.*

**V**WE have already spoken to some *Quest. 6.* Cases of conscience considerable, About pleading in the incessant practise of this duty of ing in prayer. A sixth Case commeth now to be spoken to: namely, touching holy pleading with God in our prayers. Wherein let us consider and cleare, 1. That we must use holy pleas in prayer. 2. What pleas we may use therein. 3. What Rules we are to attend unto in our pleading with God in prayer.

Now first, that we may and must plead with God in prayer, *Esay 1. 18.* God saith to penitent ones, *Come, let us reason together.* God reasoneth with us by his word and Providences outwardly; and by the motions of his Spirit, inwardly: but we reason with him, by framing (through the help of his Spirit) certain holy arguments

That we must plead in prayer.

either seldome, or but little at once, with  
persons that suffer from it.

**IRREGULAR  
PAGINATION**

providence.

4. That it be not out of improvidence



hence, when by the use of godly fore-

# GULAR ATION

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ments

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### *About pleading in Prayer.*

**W**E have already spoken to some *Quest. 6.* Cases of conscience considerable, About pleading in the incessant practise of this duty of ing in prayer. A sixth Case commeth now to be spoken to: namely, touching holy pleading with God in our prayers. Wherein let us consider and cleare, 1. That we must use holy pleas in prayer. 2. What pleas we may use therein. 3. What Rules we are to attend unto in our pleading with God in prayer.

Now first, that we may and must plead with God in prayer, *Esay 1. 18.* God saith to penitent ones, *Come, let us reason together.* God reasoneth with us by his word and Providences outwardly; and by the motions of his Spirit, inwardly: but we reason with him, by framing (through the help of his Spirit) certain holy arguments

That we must  
plead in pray-  
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ments, grounded upon allowed principles, drawn from his nature, name, word, or works : And it is condemned as a very sinful defect in professours, that they did not plead the Churches Case with God, *Jer.30.13.* *There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up.* If you pursue the examples of the most famous, and prevailing suppliants of God, recorded in Scripture routes, you shall finde them using holy pleas in their prayers for themselves or others. Thus did *Abraham*, *Gen.18.25.* *Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?* So *Jacob*, *Gen.32.9, 12, 13.* *Which saidest, Returne to thy Fathers house. And saidest, Surely I will do thee good.* Which is, as if he had said, Lord, I undertook not the journey upon my own head, but thou badest me goe, and I have thy word for a good successe : and therefore I look thou shouldest beare mee harmlesse, and blesse me in this undertaking. So *Moses*, *David*, *Daniel*, and others, their prayers are full of holy pleas. And that we may strenghten this by two or three reasons, consider :

*Reasons.*

1 It's an argument of familiarity with God.

1. It is an argument of holy familiarity, acquaintance, and friendship thus to plead with God in prayer : and therefore most suitable to this holy talking with God. As men use to plead with such as they are most intimate withall, so is it here ; Hence the Saints, which have been men

men inward with the Lord, to whom he hath made himself most known, and opened his minde and bosome to them, and they theirs to him; they ever use the most pleas with God in their prayers. What meere men more intimate with God, then *Abraham, Moses, and David?* and who pleaded it more stoutly and freely with him then they did? This is a branch of that *παρρησία*, which we have through Christ; and it being so dear a bought privilege, we may well improve it to the utmost, *Ephes 3.12. By whom we have free access with confidence. Heb. 10.19. By the blood of Jesus we have access with boldnesse unto the holy place.*

2. It will be an argument of fervency <sup>2</sup> Of Fervency and holy seriousness in our spirits in prayer, to back the same with prevailing pleas. As it is in all petitioners amongst men, suing for things they most strongly desire.

3. It will be an argument of our careful <sup>3.</sup> Of holy and serious minding, and recording of <sup>minding of Gods word and works.</sup> what the Lord holdeth forth in his word or works for our encouragement in our prayers. Hence when the Ministers of the Church, are wished to be Pleaders in the Churches Case; they are called Remembrancers, Recorders, and therefore men fittest to plead, yea, persons called to plead with the Lord for his people. *Esay 62.6,7. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep*



keep not silence, Give him no rest, &c. and the Hebrew Affix, doth shew their eminency in it : the Word [*Mazkir*] there mentioned, is for such a one, who by his office did note down all the memorable matters of the King, and used to suggest to the King seasonable Items of things to be done accordingly, *Isaiah 36.3. 2 Sam. 8. 16.*

Objections against pleading in prayer. But three or four things may be objected against the necessity of such pleading.

*Object. 1.* Jesus Christ is the common pleader and Advocate for his people, *1 John 2.1. If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* What need they then do any more, than barely present their requests unto God in his name?

*Ans.* True, Christs office is to present our requests to God, which we bring before him, but withall also to perfume those holy pleas with the odour of his merit and mediation : The Lord Christ meant to pray the Father for them, but yet will have the Disciples in his name to ask more to purpose then ever they had done, *John 16.23,24. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask (that is, more freely, fully, and strongly) that your joy may be full: yea, he is an Advocate to sollicite and plead on our behalf, as well our pleas for what we sue for, as the suits themselves.* Obj.

*Obj. 2.* God is not as man, hard, but rather easie to be intreated, as being much more merciful, and wise, then any of the sonnes of men : whose wisdom from above, is to be easie to be intreated. Besides, as men, the more intire and sincere they are, the more candid they are, in ready answers to others desires, which they may grant. They will not assent to carry it otherwise then they intend : no more will the Lord ; but as he is, so will he shew himselfe to be, ready to shew mercy, and ready to forgive, and therefore what need such a urging on pleading?

Mich. 7. 18.  
Esa. 65. 14.

*Ans.* True, the Lord is thus ready to help and heare ; yet who more full of pleas for his mercy then *David*, the Pen-man of the Holy Ghost, in ascribing this to God, that he is ready to forgive, and plenteous in his mercy to all that call upon him ? *Psal. 86. 5.* in that very place hee pleadeth : *incline thine ear and hear, why so? for I am poor and needy.* verse 1. *and preserve thou my soul ; why so? for I am thy servant, and trust in thee.* verse 2. &c. *Be merciful to me O Lord, why so? for I cry to thee continually.* verse 3. *And rejoyce the soul of thy servant, why so? for unto thee O Lord, do I lift up my soul.* Verse 4. which is backed with another argument from this very gracious disposition of God, verse 5. *For thou Lord art good, and ready to shew mer-*

mercy, and rich in goodnesse to all that call upon thee. This readinesse then to mercy must not hinder, but further the Saines pleading in prayer, and help to finde the more Argument, whereby to plead with God therein. Jesus Christ knew that his Father alwayes heard him, *Ioh. 11. 42.* yet in that his solemn prayer recorded, *Ioh. 17.* how many Arguments doth he use, to strengthen his Petitions, as to glorifie him, verse 4. 5. *Father glorifie thy Son: why so? The Hour (or the Time) is come; I bid.* And verse 4, 5. *I have glorified thee on Earth: And I have finished the work thou hast given me: And now (or therefore) glorifie me, &c.* & V. 21 *Let them be one in us: why so? That the world may know thou hast sent me.* V. 24. *Let them be with me to behold my glory: why so? For thou lovedst me before the world was.* Surely God himself must needs be ready to do what himself willeth; yet as one stirring up himself to act, he argueth with himself, *Esay. 51. 9. Awake, Awake O Arme of the Lord; why so? Art not thou it that hast wounded the Dragon?* and verse 10. *Art not thou it that hast dried up the Sea?* So *Esay. 63. 8.* For he said, *Surely they are my people, children that will not lye: So he was their Saviour: and Psa. 12. 5. For the sighing of the poor, and cry of the needy, I will arise, saith the Lord, and see him at liberty from him that puffeth at him.* God glorifieth his readinesse to mercy;

is that we no sooner plead for it, in our prayers, but he sheweth mercy, *Esay 65. 14. Whilst they yet speak, I will hear*, *Psalm 65. 2. O thou that art hearing prayers*. It is the Lord who prepareth our hearts in prayer, and furnisheth them with holy pleas; and it is the rather a pledge that he is ready to hear the pleas of his own spirit. The Lord may, and sometimes doth prevent his people with mercy, *Esay 61. 24. Before they call, I will hear*. Yet ordinarily he will have us to pray and plead first, and he will answer us. Christ prevented *Zachew*, and bad himself to his house, *Luke 19. 5. Zachew, come down quickly, for I must abide at thine house to day*: yet usually he went to no house, but he was first invited; which maketh way to answer another objection.

*Obj. 3.* God may and doth bestow upon his people many desirable blessings, without so much ado, in pleading for them: The penitent thief did but say, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*, and Christ presently answered him, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, *Luke 23. 42, 43.* and the Publican did but cry, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*, and he went away justified, *Luke 18. 13, 14.* And David did but in a short ejaculatory way seek the Lord, and he delivered him from all his fears. *Psalm 34. 3, 4.*

*Ans. 1.* Some extraordinary examples

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do not take away from the force and course of an ordinary rule, in this business of prayer, nor any other.

2. The cases of the Saints may be such, and so circumstantiated, that a few broken expressions may be as much, yea, more in them, and from them, then many pleas in themselves or others, in other cases, and at other times. As in the poor thief, compassed with so much sense of guilt of his former leud courses, with bodily tortures, fear of death, &c. So in *David*, in that instant when he changed his behaviour before *Abimelech*, *Psalm 34.* title. So in cases of poor tempted Saints, under bonds, bolts, and keepers, (as it were) and with heavy weights upon their spirits. *They make short cries in depths*, *Psalm 130. 1.*

3. God will sometimes order passages for peculiar examples of his royal bounty, that none may glory in man, nor in prayers, nor in pleas, although aided therein by the spirit of grace; and that none may be dismayed, albeit they cannot sometimes plead the cases of their souls.

4. The Scripture in recording the Saints prayers doth not always express all, but rather setteth down the summe and substance of what was uttered by them.

5. In short prayers there may be couched many pleas, as in that of the Publicans prayer, wherein almost every word includeth a few



cret plea. As that term of [Lord] is a plea of respect to an humble servants request: so that [be propitious] includeth pleas from Gods own mercy, and Christs merits. So that [to me a sinner] that is, chiefest of sinners, it was a very plea for grace to him that was such a one in his own sight and sense. To be sure he had a pleading spirit in him.

**Object. 4.** God is not as man to be moved by our pleas, but abideth unchangeable in his purposes of what he will do: So that as he said to *Samuel* touching *Saul*, 1 Sam. 16. 1. *Why mourneest thou for Saul, seeing I have rejected him? God is not as man to repent*, what pleas soever are made to the contrary, 1 Sam. 28. 15. *God answereth me not* (saith *Saul*) *neither by Urim, nor by Prophets.* Lord Lord, (plead they in *Luke* 13. 25, 26.) *have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence? And Matth. 7. 21, 22, 23. Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils?* but both in vain: *I know you not* (saith the Lord) *depart from me, &c.*

**Ans. 1.** It's true, Amidst Gods divers expressings of himself to us, sometimes as frowning, sometimes as smiling, there is no change with God; God is the same when he carrieth it to us as willing, or when as unwilling to hearken to us: because by an immutable act of his counsel, he ordered it to carry it so diversly towards

wards us in his dispensations.

2. Its true also that there is nothing done in time, but the Lord decreed it immutably before all time; as that he would confer upon his people such and such a mercy, but in such a way of moving them to pray and plead for it.

3. Its true also, that there is a time when pleas avail not: as,

1. For a time: and so the Lord may express distaste, and carry it as one that is angry with his own, yea, when pleading in prayer. The Church pleadeth, *Psalm 80*

*1. Hear: why so? O thou shepherd of Israel, &c. yet verse 4. expostulateth, Why art thou so long angry with the prayers of thy people? yet were their pleas, and prayers, and tears treasured up for a fit season of help.*

2. For ever: namely in case of expiration and ending of the date of the day and season of grace with any, *Prov. 1. 10. They shall seek me early, and not find me.*

4. Albeit the Lord be not moved by our pleas; yet are our pleas his ordinance, and therefore we are to attend thereto: and they are an ordinary way and means in the use whereof God will give promised mercies; yea, they are a means which the Spirit of God maketh use of to move and quicken up our sense and feeling of such and such wants, our desire of such

and such mercies, and our faith in such and such promises or attributes of God, (or, the like) to put us upon the serious urging of such and such holy pleas in our prayers.

Now we come to the second thing propounded, namely, what pleas we are to use in our prayers to the Lord. There is in arguing the cases and intricacies of our souls, spiritual Topick places (as I may call them) certain radical notions of God and Christ, and the Word, which afford fruitful and forcible arguments in our holy discourse and reasoning with God: true it is, that it is not every way in Christianity that can raise so fully, seasonably, strongly, plentifully, and graciously, such prevailing pleas: these are but Juniors and Freshmen in the school of Christ; others are Senior Students in this holy Logick; there is much still required to become one of Heavens Bachelors.

But for the better help and direction in this Art, and fruitful practice thereof, let us reduce these pleas to three heads. Some respect God, some our selves, some others. I will then of some pleas respecting God, and there we finde the Scripture recommending some approved, and (as I may say) unanswerable pleas. As first, the engagement of his own name in the cases before him. When a petitioner hath such

Pleas with  
God resp. to  
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own name.

skill in pleading his suit, that he can prudently involve the petitioned party in his case, and so make it as well the case of the petitioned, as of the petitioner: this with men is undeniable pleading. So is it here with God, thus *Exo. 32. 11, 12. Why doth thy wrath wax hot, &c. Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did the Lord bring them out to slay them in the mountain, &c.* As if he had said, Lord, I say not how the name of thy grace, wisdom, faithfulness and long-suffering, may suffer in the eyes and hearts of thy professed people, if thou shouldest deny my request; but consider what a disparagement it will be to thy glory, in the eyes of thy enemies, to deal so strictly with thy people: men are forbidden to lay a stumbling-block before the blind; and will God lay such an occasion of offence and falling in the way of blinde Egyptians? The like plea is used in *Psal. 79. 9, 10, 11. Help us for the glory of thy name, purge away our sins for thy names sake: wherefore should the Heathen say, Where is their God? Render to them the reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.* So *Psal. 74. 18, 19, 22.* and in many other places to like purpose. The cases wherein Gods name and glory is in any special sort engaged, are of greater weight and concernment, and therefore none need be afraid or ashamed to plead them.

them in such sort before the Lord : in such pleas truly, if the Lord should deny his Saints, he should deny himself. And the self-denial of the Suppliant shines forth the more in such pleas, when he pleads the case, not so much in reference to himself, as to the Lord himself, and to his name.

Secondly, the suitableness of the relation betwix God and us, as *Psalm 79. 9.* *Help us O God of our salvation; deliver us for thy name sake.* As if they would say, thou stilest thyself *the God of our salvation* : we by thy grace do eye and own thee as such a one; wherefore shew that thou art such a one by saving of us: let it appear that it is no empty title. And what is more suitable to a God of salvation, then to save his people? or wherein shall that Name of thine be more magnified, then in thy delivering thy people? So *Esay 63. 16.* *Doubtless thou art our father, our Redeemer, &c.* As if they had said, O Lord, we have no other but thee; of whom should children seek for relief, or from whom should they expect succour, but from their father? Now, we are resolved to own no other for our father but thee, and can a father be curst to his poor, desolate, disconsolate, sick, or sad children, when it is in his power to relieve them? To this we may adde the suitableness of the mercies we ask

His relation to us, and fits us to help us.



of God, unto him, and unto us. So *Num.* 11.17,18,19. *Let the power of my Lord be great, as thou hast said, The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, &c. pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy people.* As it is suitable to a sinning people to get a pardon, so it is most suitable to a sin-pardoning God, to give forth a pardon to them. So *Psalms* 130. 4. *But there are forgivenesses with thee, that thou maist be feared.* I need not speak more in this case, or so much as scruple it, that thou shouldst be strict upon a poor desolate tempted creature, to mark what is done amiss, and so to proceed to condemn or confound such a one as I am; for there are Forgivenesses with thee: the manifold pardons that I need for my manifold and multiplied sins, are in readiness in abundance with thee: thou canst not deny the benefit thereof to me in my case; I will and do conclude it as a granted case, there are forgivenesses with thee: What then? that thou maist be feared. Thus the Faith of Heavens suppliant will be coming within God, and will be framing good conceits of God, and telling him how well they are perswaded of him, and of his generous nature, that if he deny them, he should disparage himself in their eyes, who had better thoughts of him. As *Paul*, desiring *Agrippa's* becoming a Christian, he windeth him in by his holy Rhetorick,

thus,

thus, *Believest thou the Prophets? yea, I know thou believest*: so that if Agrippa deny this, he must in a manner weaken his own defence: so when the Saints in their prayers and pleas hold forth their faith in God, as such or such an one, in his gracious nature, the Lord useth not to exercise himself short of their apprehensions; but it is for his honour to make good the utmost of his peoples desires and expectations of Faith.

Thirdly, the little gain that the Lord would have by denying his people, in the mercies they request. *David* beggerh his own life of God, using this plea, *What profit is there in my blood?* Psalm 30 9. So did the captive Church plead, *Psal. 44. 12. Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth thereby.* So then, poor Saints of God, when they come and tell the Lord in their prayers, that indeed he may condemn, or confound, or cut or cast them off; he may continue to frown upon them, and to withdraw his spirit from them; he may deny such and such requests of theirs, for such and such just causes, in them; but what will he gain thereby? he may gain many praises, &c. by hearing them, and helping them; but what good will it do him to see them oppressed by the enemies of their souls? or what delight would it be to him to see them fighting, and sinking, and fainting under

The little gain the Lord will have by our ruines.

under sad preflures, &c. this is an allowed, and a very successful kind of pleading. We might instance in many other pleas respecting God, as that *Esay 63. 15.* *Where is thy zeal, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained?* These are prevailing pleas, since the Lord can as soon cease to be, as cease to be zealous of his own glory, in his peoples welfare; since he neither wanteth power nor will to help them in any needful case which concerneth them: for he hath strength, and therefore is able; and bowels of compassion and tender mercies, and therefore is willing to answer and succour his people. Yea, every Attribute and Title of God, and every promise is a several plea, which God cannot deny.

Pleas respecting us:

The second sort of pleas respect the Saints themselves which plead, and they are of two sorts:

As our neediness, as we are creatures,

First, some respect the dependency and neediness of our condition.

Secondly, others the good of grace shining forth in us.

Of the former sort let us instance in these:

I. It may be, and hath been pleaded, that we are Gods creatures; both considered as men, and as Saints by calling: we are the workmanship of his hand, and as such plead for his gracious respects.

*Job 10. 9. Thou hast made me as the clay, and wilt thou bring me to dust again? As if he should say, thou hast been at such cost and pains to make me, and now wilt thou altogether marre me by afflictions and temptations? so the Church pleadeth, Esay 64. 8. 9. But now thou art our Father: we are the clay, thou art the potter: be not wroth very sore. Which is as much as to say, Fathers do not use to be irrevocably displeased with their children, nor will they correct them without measure, or whip them to death. Potters do not use to conceive so deep a distaste against a poor vessel of clay, as to rage against the same, without all respect to their own credit, or to their own workmanship: and therefore surely thou our heavenly Father and Potter canst not, wilt not do thus. Thus David pleads his Fashioning by God, Psal. 119. 73. Thy hands have made and fashioned me, give me understanding, that I may learn thy Commandments. God himself maketh it an argument to himself, why he will bear his people, Esay 46. 3. 4. I have made, and I will bear: even I will carry, and will deliver you. And it is a prevailing reason with God, not to contend for ever, lest the soul should fail before me (saith he) and the spirit which I have made, Esay 57. 16. so would God have this an argument to help the weakest faith, to expect its desires above all its fears:*  
*Esay*

*Esay 43.1.2. But now thus saith the Lord, that created thee O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not. And so ver. 7. For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him. And therefore surely the Saints may well urge this, in any like case, in prayer.*

We are frail  
creatures.

2. We may plead the imbecility and frailty of our natures. So *Job* pleadeth for the speeding of Gods manifesting of his pardoning and reconciling grace to him. *Job 7.21. Why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquitie? for now shall I sleep in the dust, &c.* As if he had said, Lord, if ever thou intendest (as I am perswaded thou dost) to renew the former beams of thy favour, and pardoning mercy, thou hadst not need to defer too long, lest it come somewhat too late; for ere long I shall return to my dust. This is *Dauids* plea in the like case, *Psalms 39. 12. 13. Keep not silence at my tears, for I am a stranger with thee. Spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* So *Job* pleadeth this, *Job 13.25. Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue dry stubble? What credit is it to so great a Majesty as thou art, to shew thy power against a poor leaf? or to run after a poor leaf, which every puff of wind whisketh hither and thither? or is it any honour so much as to a man, to be cutting and hewing a poor leaf,*  
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which can make no resistance? Thus *Abraham* pleadeth for Audience and patience in hearing him: because he is but dust and ashes, of little substance, and short continuance before the Lord: if the Lord please now to hear him whilest he is before him, he is not like to trouble him long; it is but a very little and he is gone: he is but weak, and it is not much discouragement in denial of requests, which he is able to bear. *Gene. 18. 27.* And the Lord hath sanctified this plea, as an argument to himself to shew his servants mercy, *Psal. 103. 13, 14. He pitieth those that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust.* So *Esay 57. 16. I will not contend for ever, for the spirit should fail before me.* This prevaileth with the Lord, not to charge too hard upon his poor people.

3. Plead we the extremities of our miseries, inward or outward: our extremities being Gods opportunities of hearing and helping us, *Psalms 27. 16. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; why so? for I am desolate.* And *Psalms 143. 7. Hear me speedily, O Lord, why so? my spirit faileth.* I have but a little spirit left, O Lord, to breath after thee, and speak to thee, let me not spend that in waste: Lord, my soul is dying away; speak Lord, answer Lord, before I faint quite away. A gracious answer, Lord, would even fetch life in me again: and  
nothing

We are in extremities.

nothing else but that will recover me : and therefore hear me speedily , a poor dying , sinking , fainting spirit , O Lord I intreat thee . So *Psalm 69. 12. Save me , O God , for the waters are come even to my soul : I sink in the deep mire , where is no standing.* This plea in effect is thus , Lord I am ready to drown ; if ever thou wouldst save a poor perishing servant of thine , save me : my troubles and temptations are too deep for me , I am ready to sink over head and ears in them , and therefore Lord reach hither thy gracious hand , and bear up my head above water , lest otherwise I miscarry : but especially , if such extremities continue , the continuance of them may be pleaded . Such is *Hemans* plea , *Psalm 88. 14, 15. Lord , why hidest thou thy face from me ? I am afflicted and ready to die : from my youth up , whilst I suffer thy terrors , I am distracted :* and God maketh this an allowed plea to himself , of shewing his people mercy in such a case , *Esay 42. 19, 20. I have a long time holden my peace. Now will I destroy and devour at once. And I will bring the blinde by a way they know not , &c.* Christ the Angel useth this plea , *Zech. 1. 12. O Lord of Hosts , how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem , against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years ?*

We are helpless otherwise.

4. Plead we our helplessness in ourselves , and in any other besides himself. So

So *Psa. 22. 11* *Be not far from me for trouble is near : for there is none to help.* So *Jer. 14. 22.* *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles, that can cause rain ? or can the heavens give showres ? Art not thou he, O Lord our God ? therefore we will wait upon thee : for thou hast made all these things.* So *2 Chro. 20. 12.* *We have no might, we know not what to do, but our eyes are unto thee.* Either then thou must help, O Lord, at this dead lift, or else thine enemies will prevail. So *Psal. 60. 11.* *Give us help against trouble, for vain is the help of man.* When people are in a perishing condition, it must not keep them from making out to God, but they must take this to bottom their requests upon for mercy ; their spiritual oppressors and oppressions must inake them repair to the Lord, and that will prevail for succor, from that great one the Lord Jesus. *They shall cry unto the Lord, (Esay 19. 20.) because of the oppressours, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a great One, and he shall deliver them.* *Psal. 72. 12.* It is engaged concerning Christ the true Solomon, *He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper.* He cannot forget the cry of his sucking shiftless babes, that hang upon the brest, and can no more shift for a living then a poor infant. God himself urgeth his people to come to him, with this plea in their mouths, *Hos. 14. 2, 3.* *Take unto you words and say,*

*say, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. For in thee the fatherless finde mercy. The like is done Jerem. 3. 23. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills: truly in the Lord our God is salvation. So is the Lord himself moved hence to help his people, Esay 63. 5. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation to me. And Deut. 32. 36. The Lord shall repent for his servants, when he seeth their power is gone.*

Our sins have been many and great.

5. Plead we the greatness of our sins, not to keep us from mercy, but to prevail for it. *Psalm 25. 11. Pardon my sin, why so? for it is great. Psalm 41. 4. Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee; Jerem 14. 7. Do thou it for thy names sake: for our backslidings are many, we have sinned against thee.* This is a strong plea, when sincerely urged, by an humble and contrite spirit. It glorifieth God as one that is abundant in goodness, rich in mercy, and one with whom are forgivenesses and plenteous redemption: and it honoureth Christ as infinite in mercy. Hence also the Lord himself, when he would stir up himself to choice acts of mercy to his poor people, he first aggravateth their sin against him to the highest, and then expresseth his royal act of grace to them. So *Esay 43. 22, 23, 24. 25. Thou hast not cal-*  
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led upon me, O Jacob, but hast been weary of me, O Israel; thou hast not honoured me with thy Sacrifices, but thou hast made me to serve with thy sinnes, and wearied me with thine iniquities: I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my names sake.

The latter sort of pleas respecting our selves, or the good of grace in us, are

1. Gods own stirring us up to pray for such mercies. When a petitioner

can plead with God, Lord, I come not to thy blessed Court without thy sending for; It was thou which appointedst me to come to thy doore of grace, else I had not come; thy Spirit moved me, thy promise encouraged me so to doe: and therefore O Lord, I expect the fruit of my comming and request. So David pleadeth, 2 Sam. 7. 27. 28. Lord thou saidest this and that touching my house, and therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer. And so Psalm 27. 7, 8 He pleadeth, *Thou saidest, Seek my face; and my heart answered, Thy face Lord will I seek.* And well may this be pleaded, in that God useth not so to stirre up and strengthen us to seek him, but when he intendeth to be found of us. Psalm 10. 17. *Thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt bow thine ear to hear.* Jerem. 29. 11, 13. *Then shall I seek me, and finde me, when ye shall*

The good of Gods grace, as

Gods stirring us up to plead with him.



search for me with all your heart. And God maketh it an argument to himself, that if he say to any inwardly as well as outwardly, *Seek my face*, he that speaketh righteousness cannot speak thus to them, and frustrate their prayers, and so bid them seek his face in vain, *Isaiah 45.19. I said not to any of the seed of Jacob, Seek my face in vain; I the Lord speak right things.* If *Abashuerus* bid his Spouse to ask, surely he will not faile to grant her petition, *Esther 7.1.* so here. And as when Christ called the blind man to come to him to tell him his grievance, it was truly said to him by them, *Be of good comfort, rise, for he calleth thee, Mark 10.49.* so is it in this case.

Our waiting  
upon him.

Secondly, our waitings, and the expectations of Faith which the Lord wrought in us, may be pleaded. That a King should occasion a Petitioners expectation of bounty, and faile him, were not seemly; it were strange. Hence *Asa's* plea, in his prayer for help, *Help Lord; Why so? for we rest on thee, 2 Chron. 14.11.* So *Psalm 119.66. Teach me good judgement and knowledge, for I have believed thy Commandments.* And *Psalm 25. 2,3. My God, I trust in thee, let me not be confounded.* And *Vers.5. Lead me forth in thy truth, for on thee do I wait all the day.* And *Vers.20. Let me not be confounded, for I trust in thee.* And *Vers.21. Let*

uprightnesse preserve me, for my hope is in thee. And Psalm 143.8. Let me hear thy loving kindenesse in the morning, for in thee is my trust. And it is an argument with men; such a one doth depend upon me, and I have passed my word to doe such or such a thing for him, and he commeth to meet me, according to my owne appointment, at such a time, in expectation of what I promised; and therefore I cannot, may not, must not fail him. So it is with God, Esay 26.3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose minde is stayed on thee, because he trusted in thee. And Psal. 19.14. The poore committeth himselfe to thee. Thou art the helper of the fatherlesse.

3. Thirdly, We may (in all humility) plead our heart-breakings and weepings in sense of want of mercies which we crave, and our pantings and faintings after the same. As Psalm 39.12. Hold not thy peace at my tears. And Psalm 51. David, who groundeth all his pleas onely upon the free grace of the Lord, Vers.1. Have mercy upon me, according to thy loving kindenesse, &c. yet Vers.17. he pleadeth the brokennesse of his heart, The Sacrifices of God are a broken heart; a broken and a contrite spirit, O Lord, thou wilt not despise. It is a moving argument with a compassionate father, when his child craveth this or

The breaking  
of our hearts  
before him.

that with tears, from him, not then to deny him. In such a case, a father will be ready to say, Alas my dear child, thou shalt not blubber thy cheeks any longer; come, do not thus mar thy face with weeping, thou shalt have what thou cravest: so doubtlesse is it with the Lord towards his children. When Ephraim smites upon his thigh, is ashamed, and even confounded, because he bare the iniquity of his youth, *Jer. 31. 19* how this took with God we may perceive by what himself replieth, *Vers 20.* *Is Ephraim my dear sonne? is he a pleasant child?* for since I spake against him, I earnestly remembred him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. So *Isaiah 38. 5.* *Isaiah* is bid to go to weeping *Hezekiah*, and tell him from God, *I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears.* As if he had said to *Isaiah*, Go runne to yonder child of mine, bid him not weep so sore; tell him, he shall have his request. So *Psalme 6. 8.* *The Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.* And *V. 9.* *The Lord hath heard my petition* His prayer and petition it self spake, and his tears also spake aloud in Gods ears, and prevailed for audience.

The integrity  
of our hearts  
and weyes.

Fourthly, the integrity of our hearts and wayes, in former workings after God and service for God, may by faith in

in Christ, as all in our justification, be also pleaded. *Esay 38.3.* Remember that I have walked before thee in sincerity, &c. *Psalms 71.17,18.* O Lord, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works: Now also, when I am old and gray headed, O God forsake me not. *Psalms 119.10.* With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandments. The Lord himself maketh it to himself a motive, to shew mercy to his people. *Esay 63.8.* They are children that will not lie: so he became their deliverer, *Jer.2.2.* I remember thee, the kindnesse of thy youth, &c. onely we must use this plea more rarely and sparingly, in a self-denying way, in faith in Christs righteousness, as made ours. The like also may be said of our integrity with men, which in some cases, as of reproach, slander, or injurious dealing from men, may be by way of appeal, pleaded before the Lord. *Jer.15.15.* Know, O Lord, that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. *Psalms 26.1.* Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity.

Fifthly, we may plead our sufferings, *Our sufferings* especially those that are most directly and properly for God and his cause. Other sufferings also may be pleaded, as *Nehem.9.32,33.* Let not all the trouble seem little to thee, which hath come upon us.

Howbeit thou art just in them. Psalm 90.15. Make us glad according to the dayes wherein thou hast afflicted us. But especially plead those which are undergone for the Lords sake. Psalm 42.22,23. For thy sake we are killed all the day long. Awake, why sleepest thou?

Our former experiences

Sixthly, our former experiences of mercy in like cases may be pleaded, as Isaiah 63.15. Where is the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained? Which is as much as to say, Lord, thou hadst wont to be a compassionate God, I have had experience in various conditions and cases of thy bowels; how cometh it to passe that they are so shut up now? So Psalm 71.17,18. Thou hast taught me from my youth up, forsake me not now when I am old. Psalm 61.23. Lead me to the rock that is higher then I: For thou hast been a shelter to me.

The good that we might get and do.

Lastly, the great good which we might both get and doe, may be also pleaded: God put that plea in their mouths, Hosea 14.2. Take away iniquity, and receive us graciously: why so? so will we render the calves of our lips. And Verse 3. We will no more say to the works of our hands, Ye are our Gods. Psalm 119.33. Teach me O Lord the way of thy Statutes, and I will keep it to the end. V.34. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law. Psalm 51.12.13. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation: Then will I teach



*teach sinners thy way.* And as the Saints may plead the good which they may do, if answered: so that good of inward quickning, encouragement, and enlargement which they may thereby receive, *Psal. 90. 14. O satisfy us early with thy mercy: why so? so shall we rejoyce and be glad before thee all our days.*

A third sort of pleas are those respecting others: which are these. Pleas respecting others.

1. Others experiences of the like mercy As their experience of a like help.  
in like cases: as *Psal. 119. 132. Be merciful to me, as thou usest to do to those that love thy name.* Lord, do not change thy wont, do to me as thou hast ever done to others in my case. Let not me be the first *Anomalon.*

2. Others discouragements, or encouragements in ours. *Psal. 69. 6. Let not them that wait on thee be ashamed for my sake. 29. Let thy salvation (O God) set me up on high: why so? verse 32. The humble shall see this and be glad.* If thou heare me, others will be encouraged; or if not, they will be ashamed. Their discouragements or encouragements in ours.

3. The subtle and malicious desires of ours and Gods enemies: Ah Lord, our Enemies plots and desires.  
miseries, snares, feares, straits, temptations, and falls, they are that for which they plot and wait, and are ready to reproach us with; and therefore the rather tender our case. Thus may we plead, as others have done, *Psal. 27. 11. Make my way plain,*  
I i 4 because

*because of my enemies, Pl. 38. 16. I said hear me lest otherwise they rejoyce over me, Psal. 39. 8. Deliver me from all my transgressions, make me not a reproach to the foolish.*

Now touching the last thing propounded, namely, the rules which we are to attend to in pleading in prayer, they are these:

**Believingly.** 1. Look that we plead in faith: yea, with some strength of faith, acted suitably to our pleas. *Esay 63. 15, 16, 17. Where are thy bowels towards me? Doubtless thou art our Father: Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?*

**Skilfully.** 3. Look that we doe it with holy skill, Improving those promises or Attributes of God, which are most suitable to our present cases, which are most strongly speaking, most apt to move, at least our selves to believe, and such as used to prevaile that way formerly. So did the Church, *Esay 63. 15, 16, 17.*

**Submissively.** 3. Look we be submissive in our pleas, and not inordinate, impatient, or distempered. *Moses* was somewhat distempered in those pleas, *Exod. 5. 22, 23. Wherefore hast thou evil-entreated this people? why hast thou sent me? and Num. 11. 12, 13, 15. Whence should I have flesh for so many? I am not able to beare the burden alone. If thou deal thus with me, kill me.*

**Humbly.** 4. Look that we be humble and self-denying therein, and come not to God to stand

stand upon terms with him, or to chop Logic (as we say) with the holy one Job was too blame herein, Job 23. 4, 5. and so were they Esay 58. 3. *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou regardest it not? So Matth. 7. 21. Have not we prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done wonderful works?*

5. Look that we be sincere in our pleas, Sincerely. that there be nothing lurking with us, and too well approved by us, which may be counterpleaded against us, and that justly by our own consciences. As Esay 58. 3, 4. *Behold yee fast for strife. So Matth. 7. 22, 23. Depart from me yee workers of iniquity.*

## CHAP. VII.

*About straitnings in Prayer, and their Causes, Cures, and Differences.*

**H**AVING spoken of sundry cases of Conscience touching the incessant practice of this duty of prayer: we come now to speak of the seventh Case considerable therein, namely, concerning straitnings incident to the Saints in prayer: *Qua. 7.* and therein we shall enquire of the About the Causes, and then of the cures, and then Saints strait- of the differences of these straitnings, in-nings in cident to the Saints, from that judicial prayer. speechlesnesse of hypocrites and reprobates.

But

But first we shall premise and prove that the Saints may be straitned, and have their mouthes in a manner shut up in prayer. This is too evident in ordinary experience; and it were most sad, if such as were sometimes shut up that they cannot pray, yea and that some continuance of time, should be concluded to be therefore none of Gods called and chosen ones.  *Davids* mouth was in this respect shut, and therefore he intreateth the Lord to open it for him.  *Psal. 51. 15.* And hence also  *Asaph* complainerth of his being spiritually shut up,  *Psal. 77. 4. I am so troubled that I cannot speak.* Hence even the Saints are described under the notion of prisoners,  *Isai. 61. 1.* and whose experience doth not at some time or other seal to this? But come we to consider things in the order as they were propounded: and first of the causes of such straitnings, and they are three; God, Satan, and our selves.

Causes of  
straitnings in  
prayer.

I. Gods withdrawing and  
shutting up.

I. God is a cause: he withdraweth his Spirit, the Authour and efficient of all our liberty of speech, or steps which respect the welfare of our souls,  *2 Cor. 3. 17.* Hence called  *the free spirit,* from the effect, because it freeth us to speak or do any thing to or for God, which he calleth us unto,  *Psal. 51. 12. David* wanted, and in his own sense had lost this spirit, in such like efficacies of it, and in the  
sup-

supporting influence thereof : yea the Lord sometimes layeth some spiritual bonds upon some of his professed people. Hence that complaint of the Church , *Why hast thou hardened our hearts , from thy fear ?* *Isai. 63. 17.* She found her self clung up in the wayes of God. The Lord which sometimes opens the hearts and spirits of men , can and doth other times shut them up , so as none but himsele can again open them. *Revel. 37. He shutteth, and none can open.* Sometimes some of Gods own professed people , which are not bound by any Church for sins deserving the same in the nature of them , but being hid from the eyes of men , they cannot sentence the persons guilty thereof : yea , but the Lord ordereth the matter so , that they go conscience-bound , and excommunicated by God for the same. So was *David* after his fall , and before his confession of the same , which (as it is probable) was not till a good space after , even after the birth of the child which he had adulterously begotten , *2 Sam. 12. 13, 14, 15.* O how a Christians spirit is hampered at such a time in and by the cords of his own sin ! how is he bound up in petition and confession , having no list to pray ; and when he is at prayer , no life or delight in it ! If he come to pray , he hath little or nothing to say , his words stick in his teeth ( as it were ) his thoughts are not at liberty to attend his words , his affections .



affections are not stirring, he cannot get his heart to be affected. If he do strive, it is but as against the stream; he would fain weep sometimes over his condition in his prayer, but cannot: he is often pressed in spirit, to make his moan thus and thus to God; but when he cometh to it, his spirit is shackled, and he can but shake his chaines before the Lord: his faith was in a dead sleep in his prayers, he cannot tell how to apprehend any thing of God or Christ, (in a manner) therein, but is in his own sight like an Atheist: the promises which sometimes have been a great support unto him, now he is not able to see any thing in them, or to make any thing of them: his mind is full of hurries, but at no liberty to fix upon God or his Covenant, yea he is not free to desire grace and redresse, as formerly: his conscience passeth by him whilst he is upon his knees, and often upbraideth him with his sin or sins, but will scarce afford him any friendly word of direction what course he should now take to mend himself. God seeth his servants sometimes play the spend-thrifts, and running into arrerages with him, and then he will lay them under restraint for a time, till they do humble themselves in serious manner to them; or he taketh notice that they wax wanton, and begin to abuse their inward freedome, or are not so thankful for it; and in such a case

case he will cut them shorter, and abridge their former liberty : or else he observeth much pronesse in them to turn such grace of his into wantonnesse, to grow secure and flighty, if not proud and self-conceited, by occasion of that liberty of spirit which sometimes they have in prayer : for the redresse and prevention whereof, he shutteth them up, and keepeth them short, that if they have any liberty that way, it shall be onely as they stand in great need of it : It is probable it might be *Hemans* case, who being a man of rarest abilities, (as appeareth by 1 *Kings* 4. 31.) he might happily have run more riot, if not restrained and kept short, and under. *Psal.* 88.8. God will by such restraints warn them from their own gift of prayer, that they may not rest in it, or trust to it, and he will make them know whence is all their freedom in prayer, and prize it more, when they shall againe be enlarged ; and cause them the rather to see how God owneth them thereby, and so put them upon a freer owning of him, by occasion of his loosing even these spirit-bonds. Truly Lord I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds, *Psal.* 116.16. In a word, the Lord will by such straitnings have them know their dependency, as upon him, so in part likewise upon their fellow brethren and sisters, and to see a need of the help of their praying abilities, as *Cant.* 5.8. Now if there be ever

brother or sister (as there are ever some) at liberty, when some others of their brethren are confin'd, & under some restraint, their liberty yet is welcome news, and putteth some life into these poor prisoners at the grates, and now must they be speedily called and spoken with to remember their poor brethren, and to take the next opportunity to bespeak their liberty, and to get a grant from God for their speedy release; Like *Absalom*, when not suffered to come at Court, earnestly sending to *Joab*, a Courtier, and one that had the liberty of the presence-chamber, to speak to the King for him, that he may have free access to him as formerly, 2 *Sam.* 14. end.

2. *Satan.*

2. *Satan*, he sometimes surprizeth the Saints, they are in his hands, he hath them, *Luke* 22. 31. and then you see in the instance of those Disciples, that they are so heart-bound this way, that they could not watch or pray, no not for the least space of time; no, not when in the most danger, *Matth.* 26. 40, 41. Yea albeit there were some stirrings in their spiritual part to the contrary; faine they would have prayed, but could not, their spirit was willing: the Lord gave leave to *Satan* to hamper them a little, and to correct their former presidence, pride, and carnalnesse, *Luke* 22. 24. *Matth.* 26. 8, 9, 10, 35. Sometimes the Saints are Just Captives under the hands of their spiritual enemy

enemy, *Eſay.* 49. 24. Sometimes the devil layeth a ſnare for them, and ſo they are entangled, and ſtraitned thereby, namely by raiſing carnal fears or cares in them, or by increaſing or ſtrengthening them being raiſed, *1 Tim.* 6. 9. *Prov.* 29. 25. or, he doth peradventure hurry them into ſome ſlowes of temptation, in which they ſinke and ſtick faſt, and cannot ſcarce ſpeak or ſtir, *Pſal.* 69. 2, 3. The *Plaſmiſt* was ſo hampered and bemudded through temptation, that he had no liſt to cry or pray: *I ſink in the mire, I am weary of my crying.*

3. Our ſelves: and ſo our ſtraiſning in 3. Our ſelves, prayer is cauſed,

1. From ſome luſt or ſinne, unto which *By ſome luſt.* our hearts are let out; ſome deceit of ſin cauſeth ſuch benumbing and ſtupifying of the ſinews and ſpirits of the ſoul of a *Chriſtian*, that he cannot beſtir himſelfe in any ſuch holy ſervice as prayer is. *Heb.* 3. 13. *Leſt any be hardened by the deceitfulneſſe of ſin.* And look as it's ſaid of the wicked, that he is bound by the cords of his own ſin, *Prov.* 5. 21. ſo is it true in part in the *Saints* themſelves: and as it was with *Simon Magnus*, he being under the bond of iniquity, under the binding power of covetouſneſſe, and pride, he could not pray (for his heart) himſelf, but beggeth *Peters* prayers, *Acts* 8. 23, 24. So is the ſame in part verified,  
in

in respect of some degree of straitnings occasioned from like sins in them, albeit not in like power : such sins will bind both by their hardning power, as before was said, and by their terrifying perplexities, which they may occasion in the soul; for as legal terrours in the strength of them, are imbondaging and binding to the spirits of men under the power of them : hence that of *the spirit of bondage to feare*, Rom. 8. 25. So any other feares occasioned by sin, which are not so properly legal, yet they are in this sense binding to the Saints oftentimes. Hence *Asaph* is so troubled with perplexing feares, in the sight and sense of his sinne, that he cannot speak to God, namely with that freedome and liberty of spirit and speech which formerly he did, *Psal. 77. 4.*

2. From some carnal dis tempered griefs which do contract our spirits (as spiritual) as griefs do the natural spirits, as we are naturally such; in sufferings, we cannot utter our minds, *Rom. 8. 18, 26.* When a discouraging sinking fainting frame of spirit seizeth on us, it is with us as it was with *Daniel*, we are not able to speak to the Lord, *Dan. 10. 16, 17, 19.* the Disciples under that frame could not pray, although enjoyned by Christ, *Luk. 22. 40, 45.* *Aaron* could neither speak, nor do ought before God that day, when too much oppressed with grief about his sons death, *Levit. 20. 19.*

3. From



3. From our straitning of God, and of his Saints or servants. When we straiten the spirits motion in meditation, or otherwise, then cannot we hold on either in praying to God or praying of him; they cannot pray indefinitely, or in every thing give thanks, which *quench the spirit*. Hence when the Apostle exhorteth to these, he exhorteth from this, (*1 Thes. 5. 17, 18.*) as a bar thereto; when the spirit is pent up in us, then doth he leave us. He is a free spirit, and will be at liberty where he dwelleth and abideth; and when we allow not room to him, he will be gone, and then our spiritual liberty goeth away with him: or if we are straitned toward Gods poor afflicted Saints, truly God will leave us to straitnings in prayer. Hence if those the Prophet spake to, will enlarge their bowels to the poor, draw out their souls to the needy, he promiseth in the name of the Lord, that their spirits shall be free, and ready to pray, and that the Lord will be as free, and as ready to answer, *Isai 58. 9, 10.* else if otherwise with them, no wonder that they see ones apart to fast, but are not enabled to pray suitably, *vers. 3.* They were like toague-bushes in comparison of true Suppliants, they could bow down the head, but not sincerely open the mouth in prayer to the Lord, *verse 5.*

3. Straitning of God, or of his Saints and servants.

4. From distrust and strength of unbelief, an unbelieving *Zacharias* shall be  
KK dumb.

4. Distrust.

dumb. *Luke 1.22.20.* Men under the power of unbelief are wholly shut up, *Rom. 11.32. he hath shut them up in unbelief;* so is partly manifest in this business of prayer. None are so free to pour out their hearts upon all occasions in prayer, as they that trust in God, *Psal. 62.8. Trust in the Lord at all times, and pour your hearts to him;* when faith is not stirring in the soul to take hold of God, a praying spirit is not stirring to call upon God, *Isai. 64.7.* When a professed people of God through distrust secretly think that Gods hand is shortened, it is no wonder then, that even God by his spirits motions doth call on them, and invite them to prayer, or the like, that they have no list to that, nor are they free to make a suitable answer therein unto the spirit in their prayers: whence that complaint and expostulation of God, *Isai. 50.2. Wherefore when I called, was there none that answered?* Distrust doth limit, confine, and straiten the power, mercy and truth of God, the merit and mediation of Christ, the latitude and vertue of the covenant of grace, which should be the foundation of the souls enlargement in prayer, *Psal. 78.41. they limited the holy One of Israel.* It is by faith onely that we comprehend those dimensions in the Lords love, &c. *Eph. 13.18, 19.* without which the soul cannot see or conceive any such height, or length, or breadth, or depth, and know the love of Christ, and  
 passing

passing knowledge. That he may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye may comprehend with all Saints what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.

5. From an unsettled and unstable frame of spirit, whether in respect of the practise of the duty, or in respect of the place of our abode. *Prov. 17. 24.* When a man is (as it were) upon journeying still, his prayers are suitable to those travellers, whose spirits use not to be enlarged in prayer, through the many occasional hurries of their spirits. 5. An unsettled and unsuitable spirit.

6. From resting in former enlargements, or present preparations to prayer, this stoppeth the flowing and spreading of holy desires to grace, yea, it banketh out the continued course of the spirits influences. 6. Resting in former enlargements.

7. From carelessness and improvidence, either in putting our selves upon straits of time, and so the duty is performed in a hurry; and no wonder the spirit in such a case, as pent up, from so specious pretence at first, There is not now time, therefore what need enlargements? Brevity is more seasonable; and so by frequent inuring our selves to be thus straitened outwardly for a time, our spirits by little and little are conformable thereunto; or in heedless admiring other vain and impertinent thoughts which take up room in the soul, that they crowd

better thoughts into corners.

8. Curiosity.

8. From curious puzzling our selves about comprehending and conceiving of God, without reference to the present matter in mention in prayer. In this work, after the soul hath in vain toyed it self, and made nothing of it, it gathereth to it self discouragement, and hath no list to speak any more in so Atheistical a sort as at such a time it will be apt to conclude: whereby it cometh to pass that the wheels of the soul wanting the oyl of joy and delight, they stick and cannot be readily turned about. Such straining of our strings too high, doth but occasion some cracking in them, and thereby our musick is marred for that time; when our spirits are once nonplust, (as they will soon be in such transcendent mental discourses of a subject past their comprehension or inquisition) they then blush, and the shame thereof putteth them to silence, like some petitioner to a King, so taken up in speaking to him with many circumlocutions touching his excellency, majesty, greatness and glory, &c. that he hath forgot what he came about, and is not able to recover expressions of his request: so is it here.

Helps against  
straitnings in  
prayer.

The second thing propounded now cometh to consideration; namely, the means of cure of such straitnings in prayer; and they are these:

1. Be we sensibly apprehensive of the sad and evil plight of a spirit straitned in prayer.  
Such

Such prisoners which mourn in the sense of their thralldom, and of their pent and confined condition, are in the ready way to liberty in all the ways of God, and so in this of prayer.

1. Sensible apprehensions of the evils of such straitnings.

*Isaiah 61.1. A broken heart* will break this deep silence. And to help our apprehensions herein, consider but how sad it is to be tongue-tied otherwise. *Mark 7. 32. 34.* The Lord Christ sighs over it, and you see with what difficulty it is cured, *ibid.* Such are usually as deafish in hearing the word as they are spiritually tongue tied, they are straitned in hearing as well as praying dispositions: the Saints are never more enlarged in praying, then when their spirits are much straitned, quickned, and enlarged in hearing; and so on the contrary, men that have ears but hear not, have not spiritual use of their ears: they have mouths and speak not, they have not the fruitful use of their mouths in prayer; yea, such a dumb distemper in prayer, is attended with spiritual lameness, and halting in the ways of God; in walking wherein, they make little progress. Hence is it that the Prophet prophesieth of spiritual dumbness and lameness to be cured at once, *Isaiah 35.*

Evils of such straitnings.

6. How miserable and uncomfortable is the case of a man otherwise dumb, every one will easily conceive; and truly this spiritual tongue-tied condition far exceeds the misery of that, as might be easily demonstrated. When a man which hath spoken, is taken speechless, how sad is it



accounted in all that behold it, or hear of it? Alas saith one, heard you not of such a sad thing befallen such a one? he hath lost his speech: if he could but express his mind, it would never grieve his friends so much; but alas, he is suddenly taken speechless; so might much more be said of such a Christian. Hence a speechless condition is inflicted upon the unprepared guest, as a sad *Omen* and fore-runner of his after-doom, *Matth. 22. 12*. It was the next and first effect of divine wrath upon such professors, and it is well if it be not the case of many that hear me this day. Ah, how sad is it to hear ones tongue cut out? (as I may say :) nay, suppose it be but gagged by the enemies of our souls, like notorious thieves; first, robbing us of the treasure of our peace, and leaving us Conscience-wounded, and then gagging of us, lest by our out-cries unto heaven they should soon be pursued and attached, and executed. O the weight such poor souls feel! but know not how to remove the same: they would fain cry, as men oppressed in their sleep, and tell how sad it is with them, but they cannot. What, to be thrown into a dungeon, and to be in a manner forbidden all means to send to, or speak with, either our heavenly father, or our elder brother, and chief tryed friend Jesus Christ! How sad is this? What, not to be so much as at prison-liberty, even to beg out of the very grate? This is most sad:  
sure

sure we are in for some great matter of fact, else we should not be left under such straits. Begging is but a poor trade, you will say; yea, but whilst we are at liberty to beg for our souls livelihood, it is comfortable, it is hopeful; but when even that poor trade faileth us, verily all will yeild that this case is much to be lamented. O how must such needs wast and pine away, like that dumb person mentioned in the Gospel? *Mark 9. 17. 18.* How will such run upon desperate adventures, like him that sometimes casteth himself into the water, sometimes into the fire; and what more contrary one unto the other? Yet verily, if not upheld, thus will these do in that want of this free spirit: a free spirit it is an upholding spirit from all such distempers. How unthankfully do such walk, if their mouths be not opened? God hath little praise from them. *Open thou my lips. and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise, Psal. 51. 15.* Sad are their cases all the while all these sweets are in their sense, at least in their experience restrained from them, whilst their hearts are hardned, congealed, (as it were) shut up, fast closed, *Isa. 63. 15, 17.* The Church which complaineth of her heart as hardned, complaineth likewise of Gods mercies as restrained from her: this black of a straitned spirit will appear the more, by comparing of it with the white of a free spirit, which is free in prayer, and

other holy Duties. What *David* said of his case is true in this, that it argueth that the Lord delighteth in us when he delivereth us ever and anon from this straitned condition, and setteth us, at a holy liberty in our spirits: the Lord delighteth in such of his people, whom he admitteth and enableth to be so free in opening their minds and heart unto him; and as *David* saith, *Psalms 18. 32, 33. God girdeth me with strength and maketh my way perfect, maketh my feet like Hinds feet*; so may we apply the same to this case, that verily the Lord maketh our way perfect when there are no more such blunders therein, and he communicateth special strength to us, when we can more freely without such stops, lets and abruptions, and restings, keep on in this part of our Christian course and race; yea, and it is an Argument, that we shall by him be enabled to do great things, when he thus enlargeth our steps; *ibid. ver. 35, 36, 37. He setteth me on High places, and thou hast enlarged my steps, &c.* And that the Lord hath known our souls in adversity, he hath owned us, and so also will when in this wise also he setteth our feet in a large room *Psalms 3. 1, 7. 1. Thou hast known my soul in adversity, thou hast set my feet in a large room.* I have urged this the more to be so apprehensive of the evil of this imprisoning of our spirits in prayer, if ever we mean to get at liberty, because there are

a sort of Spiritual Prisoners, whose hearts and spirits are shut up in prayer, and other holy Ordinances, and yet they lay it not to heart; or when they perceive and feel themselves to begin a little to be restrained, they are but slightly affected with it; they think all is not well with them indeed, or so well as formerly, and wonder what is the matter that they are not so free and so much carryed out in prayer as heretofore, but it may be this is but nine days wonder to them, and so by degrees their spirits are still more and more straitned, and then they begin to have more serious troubles and fears about the same, what the issue thereof may prove; and sometimes their fears are more desperate, lest the Lord hath thus laid them up, as intending ere long to proceed against them in a way of wrath and justice: and then they begin to bestir themselves, and make out for help. But if this straitning continue long with them, then haply, as it is with prisoners, which although at their first coming into prison, it seemed somewhat strange and sad to them, which but then walked at liberty, to be thus cooped up, and they many times sadly be-moan their case; yet having been long in prison, then they begin to grow more resolute and desperate, and are less solicitous of using means to get out. So is it here with many Christians: at first they are much troubled at their straitnings in Prayer, but  
when

when they have been a long time shut up in their spirits, cruelly then they are apt to grow more desperate, and secretly to think and conjecture, that there is little hope now, that they should recover their former freedom of spirit: they have used such and such means, but all in vain, they seem but to strive against the stream in wrestling in their poor measure with God and themselves for their liberty, and therefore they were as good even to be content and quiet, and so suffer their sins like *Dalilabs* to lull them asleep, and to bind them in such sort, that their strength departeth from them, and they are made a miserable prey and reproach unto the enemies of their peace. So much of this first Means of cure.

2. Plead Gods Promise to enlarge us.

2. Plead it with God, that his Promise and Covenant is to enlarge us, *Jer. 31. 9.* If he will lead us with Supplications, then with multiplied enlarged expressions of our hearts in Prayer; if with weepings too, then with enlarged affection also. For what God promised to them of old, he is the same to make it good to us, as need requireth: *I will (saith God) lead them with weeping and supplications in a strait way wherein they shall not stumble.* Yea, let us our faith on work; inforce such futable Promises made to persons even in their sad plight, upon our own hearts: let them shamefully give God the lye, If they do,  
if



if they dare to deny to expect freedom by virtue of the same. Since the Lord Jesus is appointed, appointed, and fitted of God for this very purpose, to speak, and that effectually, liberty to the Captives indefinitely; surely then to such poor souls as are spirit and heart-bound, groaning under, and mourning over the same as their extreme misery, *Isaiab 61. 1.* God is verily faithful in his promise, to make the dumb to sing and speak forth his praise for Gods opening their mouthes, loosening their tongues in his Service, *Isaiab 35. 6.*

Yea, but will some poor soul say; I have given just cause of this my Imprisonment, I am in for debt and delinquencies, I am justly inhibited and restrained my former freedom of spirit, and therefore what have I to plead?

*Ans.* We will grant all this, and if thou have nothing to plead, then cry, *Guilty*, and confess all is just, and put thy self upon the King and Judges mercy; yet withal plead the benefit of the Kings pardon, and of his Royal Clemency, *ingaged in the word of a King for the deliverance of just Captives*, *Isai. 49. 24, 25.* This Promise being as well verified in the delivery of imprisoned and captivated spirits, as in that of *Babels* Captives of old, which were justly delivered for their sins. Imitate *David* herein, whose case was a like case; after his grievous fall, he felt himself in the net, his spirit strangely

ly hampered, intangled, and bound up; yet he purposeth that he would constantly wait and expect, and look for his liberty again. *Psalms 25.11. My eyes are even unto the Lord; he shall pluck my feet out of the net.* So do you; and albeit while you plead and urge your case before the Lord, and press the same upon your own spirit, yet you seem to your self but hard and slight; as the Church whilst and when pleading strongly, yet cryeth out of her hardness of heart, *Isaiah 63.15, 16, 17. Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear? &c.* yet cease not to do it still; and when at any time you do get hold of any word of Grace, and grant of your liberty from the Lord, hold it fast, and be not beaten out of the same by any cavils of the enemies of your peace. If when we go on in this, or any other way of God, we would not have our steps any more straitned, take fast hold of any *item* of Gods mind, of Grace; and if we once get such a gracious Instruction and Information of Gods love in his Promise, set home by his spirit, then keep it, for the very life and livelihood of our souls depends thereon, *Prov. 4.12, 13. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitned: Take hold of instruction, let her not go, keep her as thy life.*

3. Improve the Offices of Christ for this end.

3. Improve we the Offices of Christ for this end; for (as was but now hinted) the Lord Christ was anointed and design-  
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ed to this work of procuring prisoners liberties: he is given of the Father for that end, *Isaiab 42 6, 7.* And if to free Spiritual prisoners at their first conversion; when they are under such strong iron bolts and gyves, and yet he doth it; What can he, what will he not do for such as he can once so set at liberty? but since that time they are haply held under some smaller cords for a time; and be it that we are justly under such a spiritual restraint for our Covenant breaches, &c. (as was before mentioned from *Isaiab 49. 24. 25.*) yet inasmuch as the Lord Jesus is given to be a Deliverer of all spiritual prisoners, by being given to become their Covenant: *Isai 42. 6, 7.* and *49. 8. 9.* Therefore the Lord supposeth, that such a let shall not hinder the free passage of his promised grace to such, *I will give thee for a Covenant to bring the Prisoners from the Prison.* The Lord Jesus he even begged this Office, that he might have the honour of this gracious work of delivering the poor darkned, straitned spirits. Hence *Isaiab 49. 8.* The blessed Father is brought in as speaking to the blessed Son, saying, *I have heard thee, &c. and I will give thee for a Covenant, &c. (ver. 9.) that thou maist say to the Prisoners, Go forth; and to them that are in darkness, Shew your selves; and* when he mentions his saying so, he meaneth his operative word of command of their liberty, who are ashamed to shew their heads in  
respect

respect of the sense of their own misdoings.

Improve his  
Priestly Office

Improve the Priestly Office of Christ, and the Priestly Merit and Mediation, and Intercession of the Lord Jesus for this end; for so in a special manner is he given as a Covenant for this purpose, *Isai. 42. 6, 7.* He is our Surety, and such a Baile as the blessed Father will not refuse. His suffering, as *one dumb before the Shearer, Isai. 53. 7.* and as one from whom God withdrew for a time, *Matth. 27. 46.* hath merited and purchased our liberty to approach, and freely to pour out our souls before the Throne of Grace, *Heb. 10. 19, 20. Ephes. 3. 11.* He was forsaken for a time, that we might not for ever be forsaken. *By the Blood of his Covenant it cometh to pass that the Lord delivereth his Prisoners,* not onely from a *Babylonsish*, but from all other imprisoned conditions of soul or body, *Zech. 9. 11.* therefore let all *the poor Prisoners of God, which are Prisoners of Hope, turn hither as to their strong Hold, ver. 12.* So did *Hezekiah* when not able to speak out, or pour out his heart distinctly and freely before the Lord, but in an abrupt manner; and when held under the pressures of his heart, he cryeth out for the benefit of this his Surety, *I am oppressed, O Lord, undertake for me, Isa. 38. 14.* Improve we the Intercession of Christ for this likewise; whereby the Lord Christ is fully able to deliver and rescue us from this or any other bondage:

age: *He is able to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him, forasmuch as he ever liveth to make Intercession for them,* Heb. 7. 25.

Improve his Prophetical Office also for this His Prophetic purpose, Inasmuch as the blessed Father that cal, and he might bring about liberty for all spiritual prisoners, he hath given him to be a light to them, *Isaiah 42. 6, 7.* and experience proverh it, that no sooner doth the Lord become light to poor deserted, tempted ones, but they regain liberty of spirit likewise; it is the Son that maketh any free indeed, but it is by discovering some special part of that mind, and Covenant, and Promise of God; they come to know more of his Truth, and that truth so made known to their souls, that doth set them free in this kind as well as otherwise: *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free,* Joh. 8. 32. They are the Scruples, and Objections, and mists which are in the mind, which keep the spirit so strait laced; and so long as that darkness remains, that prison state of soul remaineth too, *Isaiah 42. 7.* and them that sit in darkness out of the prison, when they are cleared up, then those binding fears and griefs of distrust vanish, and the Spirit is sweetly at liberty again, to pray more freely, or to do any other spiritual service.

In a word, Improve we the Kingly Office of the Lord Christ for the same purpose. The Lord Christ is a true *Solomon*, which His Kingly Office.



which openeth his mouth for the dumb, *Prov. 31. 8.* That spiritual bondage of the poor soul, it hath been occasioned either through some violence of temptation and corruption, or through some wily deceit of their own hearts, drawing them to give at first but a little way to slightheadness and remissness in prayer, or to some other distemper; and then to suffer our selves to go on a little in some such unsafe way, until we have been so intangled in the snare of slightheadness, that we know not how to get into a serious and fervent frame; yea, but the Lord Christ, as the Antitype of *Solomon*, he is promised, that he shall redeem his from deceit and violence, *Psal. 72. 14.* And as the Antitype of *Hezekiah* under his Government, the tongue of his stammering subjects, such as are spiritually tongue tyed, &c. yet their tongue shall be free and ready to speak plainly of God or to him, *Isaiah 32. 4.* *The tongue of the stammerers shall be able to speak plainly.*

4. Improve others liberty of Gods Throne.

4. Improve others liberties of the Throne of Grace. The Lord ever useth to keep some in his Churches at liberty for this very end; sometimes it is the turn of such his subjects and favorites, and household servants to have the liberty of the Kings Court and presence-Chamber: sometimes again some others are thereto admitted; now seek we them out, inquire out such Princely spirits, who may open their mouths for you which are dumb persons, *Prov. 31. 8.* Look as im-  
prisoned

prisoned *Joseph* made use of the butlers liberty to be a mean of his, *Gen. 40*. So do we in this case: he that had such an impediment in his speech, he had got others to speak for him, *Mark 7. 32, 33*. And those dumb ones which had friends to bring them before Christ, and to cast them down before him, they got cure, and were enabled by Christ thereupon to speak, *Mat. 15. 30, 31*. So will it be here in like case.

5. Be we sincere and cordial with God in our approaches to him: consciousness thereunto, and conscience thereof greatly furtherth our liberty of spirit. *David* who made conscience to seek Gods Statutes, and was conscious to himself that he did what he did from obedience and respect unto the words and commands of God, he saith, that *therefore he will walk at liberty*, *Psa. 119. 45*. When a Christian is conscious to himself of any sitting carelesness in the service of God, or any secret Treachery and falseness of heart in his grounds or aims therein, this appallth him, and so straitneth him.

6. Improve wee heedfully the Word preached and read. When we continue in Christs word, attending to it and on it, when we come to know the truth, and to be at free, *Joh. 8. 31, 32*. We gain oftentimes many precious loosnings of our spirits in the attentive use of the Word preached, *Mat. 15*.

9. Our spirits and consciences so freed on earth, are the freer in heav'n too, in respect of

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their

5. Be we sincere in prayer.

6. Improve the Word preached or read.

their free approaches thither, and suitable entertainments thence.

7 Cherish holy joy.

7. Lastly, repair and cherish we our Joy in God, and Christ, and his Covenant; and our hearts being thereby enlarged, will be freer to run in this or any other way of Gods Commandments, *Psal. 119.32. I will run the wayes of thy Commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart.*

Differences betwixt others straitnings and that of the Saints; which

The third thing propounded cometh now to be answered; namely, How this straitning in prayer, incident to the Saints, may be discerned from that judiciary speechlessness mentioned, *Mat. 22.12. He became speechless.* And from that sad doom of hypocrites, whose gifts of prayer, and the like, come to be so miserably diminished, & so far to decay, that they cannot pray in any sort as formerly, their gift is in a manner taken from them, *Mat. 13.12. From him shall be taken away even that which he hath.* To which I answer,

1. Is not perpetual.

1. That the straitness incident to the Saints it is not perpetual; albeit they are kept a while under some restraint, yet they are many times set at liberty again, *Isa. 61.1. As David, and others have been, and are.* True it is, that some of the people of God may lye longer by it then others, and God may keep their feet in the stocks (as *Job's* phrase is, *Job 13.*) longer then others, for wise and holy ends; some again are shut up lesse while, yet both the one and the other are

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inlarg'd at length. They for a time be bound as in earth, so in heav'n, like Excommunicants; but yet as that bound incestuous *Corinthian*, was again loosed, 2 *Cor.* 2. so is it with these. But it is otherwise with Reprobates and Hypocrites, when Judiciary straitning seiserth upon them. These chains of theirs are chains of darkness, and in them are kept too, without bail or mainprise; Their straightning groweth fast upon them, until that after a while both their words and will, and spirit and all fail them in prayer.

2. That is not total and universal, as is <sup>2</sup>It is not total. the other. That speechlesness in hypocrites is accompanied with binding hand and foot, *Matth.* 22. 12, 13. In all Ordinances as well as prayer, their spirits are shut up, and to no service of God are they free; but the Saints when straitned in prayer, yet oftentimes meet with some enlargement of heart in meditation, as the Church which found not God in publick or private Ordinances, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. yet in reflecting Meditation upon what the Watch-men the Ministers spake, therein she found Christ. Sometimes in conference with other Christians whilst sadly complaining of their deserted estate, even therein they meet with Christ.

3. The occasion of that in the Saints, <sup>3</sup>Hath not the may be some particular defeat in them, or like occasions; some particular distemper on their part: <sup>as,</sup> But the cause of this in the other, is a total <sup>Reigning un-</sup>belief.

want of true Faith and Repentance; they have not that wedding garment, *Math.* 22. 11, 12. and hence become speechlesse, when called to an account for it. Or some universal barrenesse and unprofitableness, as in the slothful servant that doth not at all, or to any purpose improve his Talent, and therefore it is taken from him, *Math.* 25. 18, 28. and *chap* 13. 12. But from him that hath not, shall be taken away that which he hath. Or it is occasioned by some high-handed contempt of reconciliation to some of Gods people whom they have injured, who thereupon commit their cause to God as the Judge of all; and God thereupon as a Judge, delivereth them over to perpetual imprisonment, as *Math.* 5. 24, 25, 26. Or else it is occasioned from some grosse, contemptuous, undervaluing, and unworthy apprehensions of God; as when the Hypocrite conceiveth God to be a most hard and unmerciful Master, *Math.* 25. 24, 25, 28. Or else a man is haply of an unmerciful and implacable spirit towards others, and therefore God justly delivers him to a perpetual imprisoned condition, even in this life, in respect of his Spirit, like to that *Math.* 18. 30, 34. Or it may be such a one doth wilfully rest in in some sprinklings of gifts of grace received, without due care of continual supply for the future as well as for the present. They care not for a heart as well as a brain-Treasury, and so like foolish

Unprofitable-  
ness.

Implacable-  
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Hardthoughts  
of God.

Resting in gifts  
received.



ish Virgins come at length to be farally scattered of Oyl. *Matth 25.3,4,8.* When there is no care of multiplying, and adding to grace received, they come at length to lose their light and vigour of gifts, as *2 Pet. 1. 5,6,7,8.* but he that lacketh these things (or holy additionals mentioned) is blind, or cannot see afar off, &c.

4. The Ministry of Gods servants useth <sup>4 Is not usually by the ministry of the word.</sup> not to bind, but rather to loose those; ever and anon they meet with some word of Grace that enlargeth their hearts to Godward, and in his wayes. Christ by his ministers saith to such sometimes, as *Esa. 49.8. 9. Goforth,* be not ashamed to shew your faces before the Lord. The Gospel preached by the spirit of Christ, effectually proclaimeth their liberty, *Esay 16.1 John 8.31.* But these are bound by the servants of God, which were sent out to loose others, *Matth. 22.10,13.* some Prophet is made an instrument as to shut their eyes and ears, so their hearts and mouths. *Esay 6.10.* Some Peter, some minister in his preaching bindeth them *Matth. 16.19.*

5. The former in their straitnings are very sensible of the burden and evil thereof, although not able to get at liberty. Such prisoners are broken hearted & do mourn, *Esay 61.1,2.* when they cannot utter their minds in prayer, they can sigh, *Rom. 26.8.* when their mouths are not open to those free will offerings of prayer and praise men-

5. Is not accompanied with senselesse of it.

tioned. *Psal.* 119. 108. Yet they offer that sacrifice of a broken heart, *Psal.* 51. 15. compared with *verse* 11. yea, it maketh them meek or submissive to any course that God would take with them, *Isai.* 6. 1, 2. And they make it the main of their begging then (then in a manner) that they might be enlarged, and free to speak to God, especially to his praise in their freedom. *Open thou my mouth, &c. Psal.* 51. 15. & 142. 7. But the other are in a manner wholly sottish and senselesse, and speechlesse, *Mat.* 22. 12. and therefore doomed to a place and state of weeping afterwards. *vers.* 13.

6 Is not final.

6. Those are prisoners of hope, and now and then suffered to walk abroad, yea, to come into their Lords gracious presence, *Zech.* 9. 12. But these are for ever thenceforward excluded Gods gracious presence. They are taken away, cast out. *Mat.* 22. 13. *Heb.* 10. 26, 27. Those have sometimes some crevices and glimpses of light, yea, of the light of Gods countenance, as through the grates at least, *Cant.* 2. 9. But these are cast into utter darknesse, herein to reside and abide, *Matth.* 22. 13.

## CHAP. VIII.

*About enlargements in prayer, when saving.*

**W**E are (God willing) to dispatch the handling of some other cases, in carrying on this weighty duty of prayer.

The eighth case now to be considered of, Case 8.  
 is touching enlargements in prayer, how they are discerned to be from saving and peculiar principles of grace, and differenced from those which are but from natural, carnal or common causes. About enlargements in prayer, which are saving, when they are for the manner,

In answer whereunto, we must premise, that persons may be strangely enlarged in prayer, sometimes from principles that are not saving. The Pharisees made long prayers, *Mat.* 13. 14. But from a principle of hypocrisie, *ibid.* From carnal and sinful aymes, *ibid.* And for a pretence make long prayers. From pride, as in those rhetorical ingeminations, *Mat.* 6. 7. From error, as trusting to such enlargements, thinking to be heard for their much speaking. *ibid.* And for those in *Is.* 1. 15. they made many prayers, or multiplied petitions, as the Hebrew phrase imports: some from carnal emulation of some famous men in the Church, will straine this way; some from delusive raptures, may be wonderfully enlarged in their expressions in prayer: yet none of these in the right.

Now saving enlargements in prayer

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may be discerned from those that are common.

1. Free.

1. They are free, not forced or strained, *Cant. 4. 11. As the droppings of the honeycomb, not needing squeezing, or as the pouring out of water, or Oyl, which runneth down naturally and freely. Isai. 26. 16. They poured out a prayer to thee. So Psal. 102. the Title.* Not but that such enlargements do often times issue from foregoing strugglings and conflictings with much opposition, and many intervening lets, yea, and are not also without sundry present difficulties; yet the spirit is free at such times, and as far as it is spiritual, it is delightfully drawn forth therein.

2. Lively.

2. They are sweet, solid, sappy, lively, strengthening enlargements, as honey or milk, *Cant. 4. 11.* and that not onely to us, but to others that joyne with us. The Churches lips when exercised in prayer, as well as preaching, run downe like the best wine, causing the lips of those that are asleepe to speak.

3. Seasonable.

3. They are seasonable enlargements. As when God in his providence calleth to them in special sort, whether in way of confession of sins, or of Gods mercy; or in a way of petition for mercies, for our selves or others. Thus *Solomon, Ezra, Daniel* and Christ were then in special wise enlarged. These fruits of the lips of the Saints are brought forth in season. *Psal. 1. 3.*

4. They

4. They are mostwhar secret closer-in- 4. Secret.  
largements. There *David* prayeth and cry-  
eth aloud ; there do they powre out large-  
ly their secret whislers. *Isai. 26. 16.* in the  
Hebrew, the same word with 2 *Sam. 12. 19.*  
as hath been formerly shewed. *Zech. 12. 10,*  
*12, 13.*

5. They are contrite melting inlarge-  
ments. *Zech. 12. 10.* Not some few drops  
of either , but abundance of such a spirits  
influences ; it is poured out : they are led  
as with supplications, so with weepings ad-  
joynd to their enlarged prayers ; such were  
those of Christ, his strong cryes were with  
teares likewise, *Heb. 5. 7.* His lips in prayer  
dropped sweet smelling myrrhe, berokening  
some holy bitternesse or brokennesse.

5. Contrite.

6. They are obediential enlargements. al.  
*David* as he offereth a multiplied free-will  
offering, *Accept the free-will offering of my*  
*mouth,* so he desired to be taught his further  
duty ; and teach me thy judgements, *Psal. 119.*  
*108.* As he opens his mouth to expresse  
his enlarged desires largely, so is it out of o-  
bediential longings to do the will of God,  
*ver. 131. I opened my mouth and parted, for*  
*I longed for thy commandments.*

6. Obedienti-

Lastly , they are thankfull inlarge- 7. Thankful.  
ments *Psal. 51. 15. Open thou my lips, that*  
*my mouth may shew forth thy praise :* if his  
mouth be open, it will appeare in his pray-  
ses : and *Psal. 71. 8.* the Psalmist's mouth  
is filled with prayse , his prayse is a fruit  
and



and concomitant of the delivery of his imprisoned spirit. *Psal.* 142. 7.

2. By the matter of them. 1. The most acceptable enlargements being mostly and best seen in sensible aggravations of our own wretchedness, as in *Ezra* and *Daniels* examples, *Ezra* 9. *Daniel* 9. *Jer.* 3. 21. the choice matter of their supplications and enlarged prayer, is, touching the perverting of their way, and their forgetting of the Lord. Oh how long will a contrite Suppliant be here in making sad commentaries upon his own wretched heart? what large declamations will he make against his own sins?

2. Gods grace. 2. In sensible amplifications of Gods grace and mercy to us, as in *David*, of which his Psalmes are a plentiful proofe. The love of God maketh him eloquent in setting out the beauty and excellency thereof to the life.

3. Spiritual mercies. 3. In spiritual pleas, especially for spiritual mercies, of which the prayers of *David* and other of Gods servants are full.

4. The afflicted or tempted ones cases. 4. In the cases of afflicted, tempted ones, especially of afflicted Churches. Oh! how large and unwearied is a gracious *Nehemiah* in such a case! hee will spend dayes in dilating upon so sad a theme in the eares of the Lord. *Nehem.* 1. 3, 4. The substance of the largest prayer that is recorded to be made by *Solomon*, concerneth most what the cases of afflicted ones in some kind

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and or other, 1 Kings 8. from the 31. verse  
54.

3. By the occasional rise of them. The enlargement of the Saints in prayer being occasioned,

3. For the occasion of them.

1. By afflictions. Afflicted *Hannah* was large and long in prayer, insomuch that she observing her moving her lips so long, saith, *How long wilt thou be drunken?* 1 Sam. 1. 4, 15. When *David's* spirit is so hard beheaded, then doth he powre out a complaint, *Psal.* 142. 2, 3. And when so persecuted and reproached, then is imployed in little else but praying. *Pf.* 119. 4. And this argueth that some spiritual principles are within, that such griefs and aylys inlarge their hearts; which naturally rather contract the spirits of men, and silence them, as in hypocrites which are then straitned. Bonds of afflictions are bonds to their spirits, they cry not when God bindeth them. *Job* 36. 13. But afflictions sanctified to the saints, make them more in praier.

1. Afflictions.

2. By the conquest of some foregoing sad temptation, or upon the remove of some sad desertion, and after some foregoing strairnings, and silencings of them. Then it is not a supplication, but they are supplications. Hence *David* is large in supplicating, *Psal.* 130. 1, 2, 3, 4. And is bent to spend in a manner his whole time in prayer, after he had got the start of such tryals. *Psal.* 116. 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13.

2. Conquest of temptations.

3. By the bringing home of some word

3. Some promise set home.

word of promise to the heart. When *David* doth pray for a free spirit, and to have his mouth opened, hee prayeth that he might heare of gladnesse, have some quickning, healing promise spoken and manifested to him as the means thereof. *Psalm* 51. 8, 12, 15. verses compared.

4 Loveto the Lord.

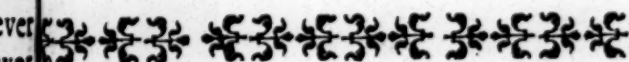
4. By some special sense of love to the Lord. Hence when the Lord setteth forth the lips of his Spouse, so freely dropping sweet and savoury expressions before him, *Cantic.* 4. 1. He magnifieth her love therein, *How fair is thy love!* love is unsatisfied; it thinketh it hath never spoken enough of its mind to the Lord, that it hath never talk enough with him, that it is never near enough to him, that it hath never hold enough of him, that it hath never love-tokens enough from him, that it hath never sufficiently declaimed against all distancing treacherous distempers and sins, and that it hath never spoken sufficiently in his praises; so that when it is stirring in the Saints, no wonder if then they are so large, and enlarged in their prayers.

4 For the issue of them; effectual.

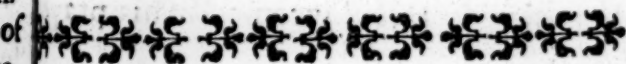
A fourth way of discovery of such enlargements to be right, is by the issue of them, being in the Saints a successful prevailing for conquering graces over their distempers, over their corruptions, over their temptations of fear, care, grief, distrust, and the like; besides, the obtaining of quickning

not ready to receive of Jesus Christ

ing, comforting grace, for doing or suffering the will of God, and depending upon the promises and faithfulness of God in Christ. The fruit of the Saints opening their mouths in enlarged prayers, is Gods gracious filling of them with such like grace: *Gal. 8. 10. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.* The fruit of *Jacobs* long continued applications, that night the Angel wrestled with him, you see what it was; his distrust and carnal fears of *Esau* were removed, his Faith and Joy are revived, and the like, *Gen. 28, 24, 26, 28, 30.*



## CHAP.





## CHAP. IX.

*About Meltings in Prayer.*

**A** Ninth Case is about Meltings in prayer, How they may be discerned to be from saving principles, and not from the moving nature of some pathetical expressions in prayer, or from some common natural passion, or melting disposition and aptnesse of nature to tears.

This case is of weight, and it's dangerous being deceived herein, in the semblance of that which ordinarily faileth not of acceptance with God: yea never, when such meltings in prayer are in truth. God eyed with a gracious aspect *Hezekiahs* tears bewshed in his prayers, *2 Kings 20.5.* and heard the voice of *David* weeping in his prayer *Psal. 6.8.*

Before we come to give a particular answer to this case, we must premise,

1. That God maketh use sometimes of pathetical expressions to break his peoples hearts



hearts, when they are more hard, and stupid, and sleighty. And therefore often in the Propnets there is much use made thereof for the like purpose. *Jeremiahs* Lamentations abound therewith: yea, the Lord maketh use of natural temper and disposition this way, sanctifying a natural, soft tender, melting disposition, as well as any other. *2 Corinthians* 5. 17. *All things become new.*

2. That yet it is very possible, that men may bee melted in prayer from such common causes; some from meer natural tempers, some from carnal grieffe, as those griev'd women, whose husbands abusing of them by marrying others in their life-time, they made them cover the Altar of God with tears, *Mal.* 1. 12. Some from the affecting and moving nature of the notions in prayer, (especially praying with others) as notions pleasing a curious fancy, or illuminating their minds in material passages, or setting forth to the life some sad-afflicting matter, &c. Many of those which with the rest of the Congregation at *Mizpeh* wept abundantly at the religious exercises there, they even drew water, the text saith, *Samuel* 7. 5, 6. Verily, in many, this was from such like common principles, albeit in others it were from holy and spiritual causes; yea, some may from some sudden extatical joyes conceived, upon

on some mistaken apprehensions and feelings in prayer, as *Benjamin wept for joy*, Genesis 45. 15. (which yet had a real ground in him,) so these from mistaken grounds of joy.

When meltings in prayer are not meerly from force of natural temper, or from patheticalnesse of expressions.

1 When more melted, yet fewer or pathetical expressions used.

But that we may come to some answer to the case.

1. When more expressions, and more pathetical are used by our selves or others in prayer, yet not like melting attending; and when at other times there are fewer such-like expressions, yet there are more meltings accompanying the same: yea, when expressions which are more obvious, and not so pathetical, yet melt us: then surely doth it evidence that your meltings are not wrung from us by any force of expression, but from some inward better principle. The Father of the possessed child in his request unto Christ for its cure, had many more moving expressions, *Mark 9. 21. Oft times he hath cast him into the fire, &c. If thou canst doe any thing, have compassion on us*, (besides those, *Verse 17, 18.*) then he useth, *verse 24.* yet in mentioning of those wherein a Fathers bowels might have flowed forth into tears, he is not melted: But in the gracious expressions he used in his prayer to Christ, *verse 24. Lord I believe, help mine unbelief*, Therein hee breaketh forth into tears.

2. When

2. When meltings whilst we pray, are in a manner without expressions; or do at least prevent our expressions in prayer; such meltings are from more inward principles then moving expressions. As in the woman which silently begged the clearing of her justification to them, as appeareth by our Saviours answer to her silent and secret desires: *Woman, thy sins are forgiven thee*, Luke 7. 48. 50. yet *verse* 38. she is there weeping behind him, without expressing in words her hearts desire.

*Dauids* tears (it's likely) first spake, ere he uttered his heart; and his tears called out expressions, his expressions did not provoke and urge his tears, *Psal.* 6. 8, 9. *Jacob* wept and prayed, *Has.* 1. 2. 4. he was weeping ripe, even as he went about to pray; his heart was so full, that it issued out at his eyes, before his mouth could utter forth his desires and ayls.

3. When they are most spiritual things, or strains in prayer, which most affect and melt us therein. Here Nature is purblind and deaf, and senseless, as above its element. Or when such passages be in prayer, wherein nature and self is most vilified, and the Lord and his grace is most exalted, then we are usually most melted; then fear not any force of expressions, or strength of a natural melting temper to be chief in such meltings. Such was *Ezra's* weeping in his prayers, *Ezra*

3. When meltings prevent prayer and expressions.

3. When the most spiritual expressions melt us most.

10. 1. And how much he exalted God, and his rich grace, and abased man and self in his expressions, the ninth Chapter verse 8. 9, 10, 13, 14, 15. will make it appear.

4. When more tears then words.

4. When they are no sudden starts of meltings, here or there, as some affecting or nature-moving matter is mentioned: nor are they some light, flitting, vanishing dew, but they are more continued and abundant; their prayers which melt kindly (albeit they are not alwayes so spiritual, yet) sometimes are sealed with tears: so that their prayers at some such times are rather weeping then words, *Psal.* 6. 8. *Hezekiah* said little, but wept sore, or much, *2 Kings* 20. 2, 3, 5. *Ezra* began and ended meltingly, *Ezra* 10. 1. & 9. 5. compared.

5. When meltings are more usual.

5. When such meltings are not land-floods; rare, unusual things (as are all forced things, which are not natural to regenerate spirits, considered as regenerate) but they are more frequent and constant, and therefore they are joyned in *Jer.* 3. 21. and 31. 9. weeping and supplications; as if inseparable in a manner, and led with weeping and supplications, as in the usual way which the Lord guideth them: yea, when such meltings are opportune and seasonable, holding some gracious proportion to the occasions which are offered, and which fall into tears and mel-

meltings, as in *Exra's* more then ordinary weeping, when a more then ordinary cause thereof was given, *Exra* 20.1. So in *Nehemiah's* weeping with his prayers sundry dayes which he set apart for fasting and prayer for the calamities of the people of God in his native Country. It is the trade of the Saints, a part of their spiritual calling and husbandry, to be ever and anon sowing such seed-teares, *Psal.* 126. 5, 6. They are mourning beggers, *Matth.* 5. 3. 4. *Blessed are the poor in spirit : blessed are the mourning.*

6. When such meltings are not meerly rain-dews and distillations, (as I may call them) when they are not meer notional fleeting things, but they are heart-drops; the heart is poured forth in and with them; they proceed from, and are joyned with a melting, tender, contrite heart, as in *Josiah's* request, which he made and God heard, *2 Kings* 22. 19. *I have heard thee*, saith God; yea, but his prayer it not there recorded; true, but a prayer its likely he made when his heart melted so before God, else what was it which God heard? or wherein is it said that God heard him? when all suitable workings in spirit do accompany such meltings in prayer, when there is strength and favour of spirit suitable to meltings in prayer, then are they right, as in *Christ.* *Heb.* 5. 7. *He made supplications*

6. When hearts  
droppings.



*with strong crying and tears.*

7. When like  
seed-tears,  
fructifying.

7. When they are not unprofitable melt-ings, but seed-tears, there comes much good fruit after them, as fruitful, upright, even walkings with God and men: Conscientiousness and tenderness of the least blunders in or at the ways of God, or any path thereof: these are fruits of Gods covenant of grace; he useth to lead his own in such sort, with such weepings in their supplications, as that they keep the closer to, and the more directly and inoffensively in the way that he hath appointed, *Jerem. 31. I will lead them with weeping and supplications in a strait way.*

8. When melt-ings of faith  
and love.

Lastly, when they are meltings of faith and love: when the Lord Christ would shew the rite and root of the womans weeping, in presenting her secret desires of his mercy, he instanteth in her love: *She loved much, Luke 7. 48. in her faith, ver. 50. Thy faith hath saved thee.* Compare that with *verse 38. She stood behinde him weeping, and washed his feet with her tears.* Thus that poor man, when in a believing frame in his prayer to Christ, then he cried out with tears, *Mark 9. 24. When in prayer the Saints are apprehensive by faith, that notwithstanding their unworthiness, and rebellions, and backslidings, yet the Lord is willing to hear them and accept of them, or return to them, and the like; then are their hearts full, then what*

what with grief and shame, in sense of their own vileness, and joy in the intimations of the favour of God in Christ towards them, they are dissolved into tears.

## CHAP. X.

*In what way we are to conceive of God in prayer.*

**A** Teenth Case is about the thoughts which we are to have of God, when we do pray: it being requisite that such as worship God in prayer, should in some measure be apprehensive, and able to conceive of God whom they worship, *John 4. 22.* We know what we worship.

About conceiving of God in prayer.

Now for answer hereunto, observe these Rules :

1. Look we do not conceive of God under any shape or resemblance: as God gave rules of worship to his people of old by voice; but in giving the same, he represented no similitude of himself unto them: so are his people in like manner to perform obedience to those Commandments of his, without framing to themselves either inwardly or outwardly any similitude of God, *Deut. 4. 12.* and *15.* compared. In seeking the Lord we ought

1. Think not of him under any likeness or shape.

not so much as to think that the Godhead can be resembled any way to any other thing, *Acts 17.27, 29. verses* compared. This was one maine rise of Idolatry in practise, to make a mental Idol of God; when men would not glorifie God, in worshipping of him as such a one as he made himselfe known in his very works, even as an Almighty one, but would strain to fancy things of him beyond his revealed will, to seem to be men of a deep search and reach, and of profound and exquisite understandings and capacity: then did they vanish in such imaginations touching the nature of God, and were more and more dazeled and darkned, and (in the just judgement of God) given up to misshaped apprehensions and Idolatrous practices, *Rom. 11.21, 22.* All things without God are finite, and too short a portraiture of an infinite Majesty. In all comparisons there must be some proportion and equality: Now, unlesse we could equal God to any thing, how can he be likened to it? *Esay 40.18, 25.*

3. Prie not too far into his Deity.

2. Look that wee doe not goe about to comprehend in our minds his glorious Essence, prying too far into his Majesty, and the like: his Godhead is one of the invisible things of God, and must no further be reached after by our shallow and dark minds, then as shining forth in the works and word of God, *Rom. 1. 20.* If we

go any further, we shall become vaine in our imaginations, *verse 21.* Who can by search finde out the Almighty to perfection? *Iob 11. 7, 8, 12.* we should shew our selves in affecting each wildome, to be but vain men. *Ibid.* *Jacob* when he was at prayer, was a little too busie herein, and too inquisitive after the name or nature of the Son, or Angel of God; and therefore is rebuked for asking his name: yet his weaknesse is passed over, and the Lord blessed him notwithstanding, *Gen. 32. 29, 30.* But rather in our approaches unto God, conceive wee of him in his back parts, in his glorious Attributes: Conceive of him as one not to be fully conceived by us, and so pray to him with such apprehensions of him. *Moses* did desire in prayer to have God to shew him his glory: his invisible being and Majesty was too much for him to ask, or to have answered: God telleth him, he could not see his glory and live; mans finite understanding and spirit would bee swallowed up, and confounded therein, *Exod. 33. 18, 20.* but his goodnesse, and name of grace, his back parts are fitter objects for *Moses* to contemplate upon, and to behold, *verse 19, 25.* compared with *Chap. 34, 5, 6.* When God came down to his people that they might worship him, *Exod. 11.* he came down in a Cloud, that their prying eyes or spirits might be bounded: the Altar

of Incense, where the Incense of prayer was to be offered, was before the Vail that was by the Ark of the testimony, before the Mercy-seat. *Exod. 20. 6.* God would have his servants to behold and mind him in their prayers; but yet his Mercy-seat was covered with Cherubs wings, they might not pree too far: and indeed it is but an endless work; we may weary our selves in this maze of the divine nature, but make nothing of our work when we have done. It is a fruitless bootless work, no good commeth of it, but amazement and discouragement: we shall but reflect upon our selves as if we were very Atheists: conceiving and believing nothing at all of God, when we go about to conceive more of him than is meet. When at any time the Saints of God, out of a witty kind of reasoning of their deceitful hearts, perswading that it is meet that we should conceive of God, to whom we pray, and the like, (which is in a sense true) do lanch out in their slender Skiffs or Canows into this vast Ocean, without the Cord and Compass of the Scriptures; now if any gust of temptation arise (as twenty to one but it doth) how are they amazed and affrighted, and know not where they are, nor how to get safe ashore again, having forgotten the work they intended at the first? and commonly the work and business



ness of prayer is for that time disappointed, and left undone, or as good, being never at such a time performed to any purpose. Besides, the advantage we give to the enemy of peace and truth hereby, which is great; and if no worse thing follow, yet we get a check from God for our labor, as *Jacob*, Gen. 32. 29. and *Manoah*, are reprov'd for asking after the name of that Angel the Son of God, which was secret, *Judg.* 13. 17, 18. *Why askest thou after my name, since it is secret?*

3. Conceive not God absolutely, as out of Christ, but as in Christ, and so merciful, gracious, and abundant in goodness and truth. We must look, as they of old, to the glory of God, in offering up our spiritual Incense; but as in Christ, considered as Mediator, who is that Mercy-seat; for so the Hebrew *Capporeth*, translated usually by the *Septuagint*, by the word *Hilasterion*, and approved by the Holy ghost, *Heb.* 9. 5. which in *Rom.* 3. 25. is applied to Christ, whom God hath set forth to be *Hilasterion*, the mercy-seat, or merciful Covering, or propitiation for our sins; or that *Capporeth*, to which Gods Priests must look when offering their Incense of prayer, *Ezod.* 30. 6. and 25. 20, 21, 22. compared. We are not taught in the Lords prayer to look at, or think of God absolutely, but relatively, as a father; namely, in Christ. Our thoughts of

3. Think of him relatively, as such or such a one to thee in Christ.

of God must be suitable to our worship of him in prayer ; which is coming to God not immediately, nor absolutely considered, but in and by Christ. *Heb 7.25. Which come to God by him.*

4. Go not too far in personal thoughts of God.

4. Let us not too much beat our thoughts about particular and personal apprehensions of God, or conclude that we are Atheists in defect thereof : but be satisfied in conceiving and believing that of him, that he is, and that he is a rewarder of such as seek him, *Heb. 11. 6.* with such other general apprehensions, which serve to keep the heart humble, awful and attentive : namely, that he to whom we pray, is such a God, which seeth and knoweth all our secrets, our thoughts, wants, and sins, and the like : that he is such an one that is with us whereever we are ; and that we are in him, and live by him ; that he observeth what, and in what manner we do any service before him, that he is a very holy God, that he is such a one which comprehendeth us, albeit we cannot so fully comprehend him ; and that therein lieth our blisse, *Psal. 139. 6.* and so throughout the Psalm : & *2 Sam. 7. 20. & Acts 17. 27, 28, 29.* Fix we our minds sometimes upon God under one, and sometimes under another of such-like notions touching him ; and let the aw and impression of God, either as one that is most holy, or that is most wise, or that is most mighty,

mighty, carry us as far along as the Lord helpeth, and then consider of him under some one or other like notion; and in our prayers carry that along in our minds as far as we can; and if our spirits wax flat, or slight notwithstanding, try them with thoughts of God under some other notion, as before mentioned.

5. Look that we limit not God to our shallow comprehensions of him; but in all our thoughts of him, conceive of God as infinitely above all our conceivings: as *Agur* did, *Prov.* 20.1,2,3,4 yet conceive of him to be one that is ready, yea who is engaged to teach us to conceive and know him; *Heb.* 8.10,11. and to do for us above what we are able to ask or think of him, *Eph.* 3.18,19,20.

6. Let us with wisdom proportion our our conceivings of God, under such a notion of his name and nature revealed in his word, as is most suitable to that which we are about in prayer. When God had proclaimed divers Attributes and Branches of his Name, *Moses* doth not go about to fill his mouth or his mind with them all at once, but selecteth out of them all, such a one as is most suitable to the request he hath hereupon to make for himself, and for *Israel*; which was, that God would pardon their iniquity, *Exod.* 24.8,9. which was suitable to one of the last mentioned Branches of the name of his grace,

5. Limit not  
God to our  
conceivings.

6. Think of  
him suitably  
to our needs  
of him.

grace, namely, that he was *one forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*, vers. 7. and the like course doth he take in that prayer of his, mentioned, *Numb. 14. 17. 18. 19. 20.* We are to glorifie God in prayer thus, according to what we know of him. *Rom. 1. 21.* especially to improve that of Gods nature, by which he hath practically discovered himself to us; conceive of him as we have found of him by experience, and as we are convinced he hath carried himself towards us: have we found the experience of his wisdom? pray to him as one infinitely wise: have we tasted of the fruits of his faithfulness? pray to him as such a one, and that part of his Name wherein he hath last held himself forth unto our hearts and spirits, in a convincing manner, and with which we are last affected most of all; worship him, and pray to him under that notion: but especially consider and conceive of him in the glorious and precious dimensions of his love, *Ephes. 3. 18. 19. that we may comprehend with all Saints what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.*

7. Let our thoughts of him issue in holy admiration.

7. Let holy admiration ever and anon upshot our conceivings of God, as it did in David, Psalm 139. 1, 2. compared with verse 7. 17. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit?* or glorious Deity; he looketh at it as wonderfully and unexpressibly filling all places: and verse 17. he cannot express the thoughts of God towards him. And likewise let humility

lity and reverence attend the same. *Ibid.* So it was in *Habakkuks* prayer, wherein he is carried out to a glorious conceiving of God: *Hab. 3. 1, 2, 3.* his heart the while trembling, *verse 16.* The Incomprehensibleness of God, and his unsearchable excellency, must make men therefore fear him. *Job 37. 23, 24.* Let our shallowness in conceiving of God drive us more out of our selves, and abase us much that we know so little of him, and inflame us with desire after that time when we shall in a glorious manner conceive of him: we understand but as Children, but in part, in comparison of that time when we shall know the Lord as we are known by him, according to the measure of our capacity, *1 Cor. 13. 12.*

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## CHAP. XI.

*How and in what order we are to direct our prayers to the Persons of the blessed Trinity.*

**T**He last Case briefly to be spoken unto, is, how, and in what order we are to direct our prayers to the persons of the blessed



bleſſed Trinity? and whether we may not ſingle out any one of the perſons, to whom we may direct more immediately ſuch or ſuch a prayer.

This Caſe hath ſome more difficulty in it then the former, yet I will endeavour to lay down the Answer thereunto, as briefly as I can in theſe following concluſions.

1. So think of God in prayer as one in Eſſence, yet three in Perſons: and ſo as three in perſons, that he is but one in Eſſence.

1. That in all parts of Divine worſhip, and ſo in this of prayer, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity is to be worſhipped and reſpected; and therefore we are not ſo to fix our thoughts on God as one; but rather to have this meditation and thought attending, that this one God in Eſſence is in perſonal proprieties three ſubſtances, really diſtinct: nor yet are we ſo to let our thoughts expatiate and feed themſelves in muſings upon the bleſſed perſons as diſtinct in perſonal proprieties, but ſtill with an attending apprehenſion of them as one in Eſſence, one Jehovah, one God and no more. He to whom the Scripture applyeth the property of begetting, he is Jehovah, God the Father, and not the Son, or the Holy Ghoſt, to whom that property in reference to the eternal begotten of God is never aſcribed: he to whom the Scripture giveth the property of being the onely begotten ſon of God, he is Jehovah, God the Son, and no other perſon: the Scrip-

ture ascribing that propriety of Communication of the divine being, in a way of begetting, to none other : and so he to whom the Scripture applyerh that propriety of proceeding, he and onely he is God the Holy Ghost : the Scripture applying to none other of the persons that propriety of Communication of the Divine being in a way of proceeding, or being as it were breathed forth from the Father; and therefore is called his spirit, *Num. 8. 11.* and from the Son; therefore is called the Sons Spirit, *Gal. 4. 6.* yet the same holy Scripture never mentions but one Jehovah, or any more then one God, even when it mentions him in personal distinctions three, yet Essentially but one, *1 John 5. 7.* and no otherwise surely are we to worship him, or to conceive of him in our worship. Let the beams of the glorious Unity of the Deity lead us in worshipping of, or praying unto God, to the consideration of the blessed Trinity; and let the mention or Meditation of the Trinity of the persons in our prayers lead us forthwith to this glorious Unity in the Deity.

2. In our prayers fix not our eyes or minds so upon one of the glorious Persons, as not thereby to be led to the contemplation and consideration of the other; or direct any prayer so to one person in the blessed Trinity, as not to exclude.

2 So think in prayer of some one Person in the Trinity, as thereby to be led to the other two.

clude the other: The Father being in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and the Holy Ghost in them both, *John 14. 10.* we cannot look at one, and behold one by a spiritual eye, but we must eye the other, and be led to the other; as our Saviour reasoneth, to prove that if they had seen him, they must see his Father also, verse 9, 10. compared: They which look at Christ as their Mediatour, must see and eye the Father, as giving of him so to be; yea and at the Holy Ghost as one who with the blessed Father sent and consented to his designation to that office, as the Lord Christ saith, *Esay 48. 16. and now the Lord God and his spirit hath sent me:* yea they must eye the Holy Ghost as that blessed spirit and more immediate efficient, by whose power and grace they thus come to the Lord, and are enabled to pray to him, or look to him; we cannot look aright to the blessed Father, but we must look to him as it were through the blessed Son; neither can we look upon the Son but by the Spirit. As he said in that case, *1 Cor. 12. 3.* so may I in this: If we worship God as our Father, with whom we have Union and Communion, we believe him to be so to us in his Son, and that this Union and Communion is effected by the Holy Ghost: so that if we worship God aright, we worship each person in the Trinity in any one person.

as Coſ-cauſes of our Sonſhip, and union with God the Father, as firſt in order regenerating and adopting of us; the Son as one in and by whom we are redeemed and reconciled, and for whoſe ſake we are accepted with God, and expect to be heard; the holy Ghoſt as the immediate efficient of and with the bleſſed Father and Son, of our calling and adoption, &c. and therefore is he called the ſpirit of Sonſhip; as the Greek word ſignifies, *Rom. 8. 15.* ſee *Tir. 3. 5. 6.* and he by whom more immediately we are enabled to pray to the Father in the name of his bleſſed Son, *Rom. 8. 26.* true it is that a Chriſtian may not in every particular petition or confeſſion, particularly and diſtinctly conſider of the other two perſons in that one perſon, to whom more properly he directeth his prayer; but yet he muſt in the general bent of his minde and ſpirit do it and intend it.

3. That in order we are firſt to direct our prayers to the bleſſed Father; yet not as firſt or chief in honor and dignity above the other two (for even the Son, who albeit as man and as Mediator he be inferior to the Father, *John 14. 28.* yet as God, as the Son of God he is equal with him, *John 5. 18. Phil. 2. 6.* and the Son is to be honored, as equal with the ſame honor as the Father, *John 15. 23.*) but as firſt in order of ſubſiſting; according as the Scripture in two places, where the order of the bleſſed perſons is ſet down, the Father is firſt ſet down in order of witneſſing, *1 John 5. 7.* and in invocation and worſhip *Matth. 28. 19.* as

3. Direct we our prayers to the Father as firſt in order of the perſons.

first in order to be mentioned and invocated : and as he is the first in order, who was displeased, and to whom we are first in order reconciled in Christ ; and who is first in order pleased on him, *Col. 1. 19, 20.* yea, who first in order among the persons laid the foundation of our Redemption : *ibid.* and therefore to him is ascribed the work of giving his Son, *John 3. 16.* and of sanctifying or anointing and appointing the Lord Christ to his Office of Mediator, (albeit, as was said, the holy Ghost be not excluded, but included, as acting in the blessed work *Eph. 48. 16.*) so are we in that order to worship him, and to breathe after neereſt fellowship with him, through Christ, by the help of his blessed spirit.

4. In singling out some person in the blessed Trinity, let it be the Father most usually.

4. In singling out any one person in the blessed Trinity, we are to pitch most usually upon the Father, as he to whom we direct our prayers through the mediation of Christ, and by the help of the holy Ghost : that is the rule and method prescribed by Christ, to ask the Father in his name, *Job. 16. 23.* and ſutable is and hath been the usual practice of the Saints : and yet in such directings of prayers mostwhat as to the Father, in the general intention of their spirits, do the Saints mind & eye the other two persons, and include them as joyntly worshipped ; and therefore in their Prefaces of prayers oftentimes mention expressly, that blessed God one in Essence, yet three in persons, as he to whom they speak ; and in the close they subscribe glory to the blessed Father, Son, and Spirit, three persons yet one God, &c.

5. W



5. We may single out the Son of God the Lord Christ, as he to whom we occasionally present some special request, either by way of Apostrophe, whilst we are directing our prayers to the Father, or in way of ejaculation: as did *Stephen*, Acts 7. 59. Lord Jesus receive my spirit: and so in the instance of that short prayer of the converted thief, *Luke* 23. 42, 43. *Lord remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom*; and so in that short prayer of *Jacobs*, the Angel which hath delivered me from all evil, bless thee, *Gen.* 48. 16. this Angel was Christ: the Father never being called an Angel in Scripture (that I read of) or being said to be sent of any other of the persons; nor do I find where the holy Ghost is called an Angel; and a created Angel surely it was not: It being unlawful to *Jacob*, as well as to any others, to worship Angels; *Col.* 2. 18. and in more continued and solemn wise did *Abraham* pray to that Angel, which in the same chapter is called the Lord; which indeed was Christ by the reasons foregoing, *Gen.* 18. end, to him did *Jacob* pray and make supplication, by the space almost of the whole night, *Gen.* 32, from verse 24. to the end compared with *Hos.* 12. 3, 4. yea, he had power over the Angel; to him is the prayer of the afflicted made, *Psal.* 102. which was to *Jehovah*, verse 1. which was God the Son, verse 24, 25, 26, 27. compared with *Heb.* 1. 10, 11, 12. read, and peruse, and consider the places at your leisure: and the primitive Saints they are said to call, not simply and one-

ly upon the name of the Father, but of the Lord Jesus Christ: for it was the Lord Jesus whom *Saul* persecuted, that appeared to *Saul*: *Acts* 9 5 6. and afterwards to *Ananias*, verse 11. it was the Lord whose Saints *Saul* so much injured, verse 10, and upon whose name such as called, *Saul* had commission to bind, verse 14. see verse 15, 17. so *1 Cor.* 1. 2. and the reasons hereof are evident,

Because

1. Prayer is due to God.

1. Because prayer is a divine worship of God as God; and therefore due to the Son, and so to the holy Ghost as well as to the Father, *Rom.* 10. 13, 14.

2. We are baptized into the Sons name

2. We are baptized into the Name of the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as well as into the name of the Father: and therefore both the Son and the Holy Ghost likewise may be particularly and personally invocated, and worshipped as well as the Father.

3. We are to believe in Christ particularly.

3. We are to believe in the Son, and so in the Holy Ghost as well as in the Father, and that personally and particularly: and therefore so are to pray to either, *John* 14. 1. That which the Apostle expoundeth of the Gentiles trusting Christ, *Rom.* 15. 12. the Prophet expressed of their seeking to him, *Esay* 11. 10. so that they are inseparably due to one and the same Christ, upon one and the same ground. See *Rom.* 10. 13 14. before-mentioned. It is supposed, that he on whom men call, he must be believed on, or else he cannot be called upon by any; and when the Apostle in the verse 13. mentions the Name of the Lord, as that which

is called upon, he in verse 14. expoundeth it to be meant of the Lord himself: to call upon the Lords Name, is to call upon himself.

4. The Lord Christ promiset<sup>h</sup> that he himself will do what we ask, *Job. 12. 13. 14.* and therefore he may be sought to do the same; and indeed he thereby proveth himself in that Chapter to be equal with the Father, by this argument, because petitions shal not only be granted in his name, but by him: neither doth he make account that this is any disparagement to the Father, but a glorifying of him: *ibi*. I will do it, that my Father may be glorified. What we have said, to prove that in our prayers we may single out the Son of God, may serve to prove the same may be done to the Holy Ghost: and more arguments might have been added if need were.

4. Christ promiset<sup>h</sup> to hear our prayers.

Against this which we have spoken, it may be objected, We are to ask all we do ask in the name of Christ; and therefore how can we be said to ask him, or pray to him? *John 16. 2.*

To which I answer: 1. The Lord Christ is asked or prayed unto in that prayer that is put up to the Father in his Name, *John 16. 23.* Christ speaking of the time after his Resurrection and Ascension, saith, *In that day ye shall ask me nothing: or (which he makes all one) Verily ye shall ask the Father nothing in my name, but he will give it you.* He is glorified as God, in that all is done with Cod in his Name, and for his Father. For albeit it be sometimes said, For *Abraham & Davids* sake God

*Answ.*

1. Christ is prayed to in the prayers made to God.

will

will do this or that; yet this is meant in reference to Gods covenant of grace with them, and so to Christ properly, in whom that Covenant is ratified, *Gal. 3. 17. They called on the Name of the Lord Jesus in all places. 1 Cor. 1. 2.* Yet surely they brake not that rule, *John 16. 23.* they called on the Father in Christs Name also, yet are said to call on Christs Name, even in their calling upon God in his Name: and Christ as God is also called upon, in that his Father as God is also called upon.

2. The Trinity undivided in worship.

3. Christ is prayed to as God, not as man.

2. In all external worship of God, one person of the Trinity being named, the other are understood, and are not to be excluded.

3. If Christ be considered as the Son of God in Essence the same with the Father, He is he to whom we come, &c. coming in prayer to the Father: if considered as Mediator, God incarnate, God and man, He is he by whom we come to the Father, *Heb. 7. 25. & 1 Tim. 2. 5.* and look as it is another part of his divine glory ascribed to him, *Phil. 3. 21.* which is true of him as the Son of God, he by his divine power doth subject all to himself: and yet in another consideration and respect, namely, as Mediator, he hath all things subjected to him of the Father, *1 Cor. 15. 28.* so it is here in this part of his glory; as the Son of God he may be, he must be prayed to, which is God and man in one person; but is not prayed to as man, but as God. So much be spoken to this weighty duty of prayer, and to the incessant practise thereof.

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